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Animals Depicted in Jade of the 13th to 14th Centuries in China

In Two Volumes

Volume 1: Text and Bibliography

Nini Lixin Yang

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy to the University of Glasgow**

September 2000

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate, with regard to the relationship between man and nature, how and why animals were depicted in jade carving, compared to other arts during the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) in China. In this way the thesis seeks to make a direct contribution to an understanding of the significance of animals in various aspects of art and life throughout the Yuan Dynasty. The former idea, that the Mongols, as nomads and forest hunters, their illiterate status and barbaric customs effectively discouraged their interest and ability in scholarly and artistic matters, used to be widely accepted. There are much more negative comments and “matter-of-fact” historical records of the Mongol rulers in China to demonstrate how true they were that the Mongols were nothing but a group of fearsome and vicious barbarians. In recent years, although this prejudice has been partially reassessed, there are still significant gaps to fulfil, to look into and to comprehend about art in the Yuan period. It is clear, however, that several aspects of the Mongols’ tastes and concepts of art differed from those of the people they invaded, conquered and ruled. Art of human being has long been existed ever since the man appeared on this planet, no matter how primitive. Their sense of art and work of art were, however, born together with the nation themselves the very first moment, even without any understanding and appreciation of the rest of the world.

The first and foremost aim of the present thesis is to demonstrate the interested scholar of Yuan jade (and indeed Yuan art in general) with a preliminary manual, which assembles, as comprehensively as possible, all relevant information available on early Yuan jade developed during the 13th to 14th centuries. These will reveal how and why Mongols used their most treasured material - jade - to depict the favourite subjects in their style of life - namely animals. Secondly, the thesis will also present a series of potential clues, not only to the specific understanding of Yuan jade animals,

but also of Yuan art and culture as a whole. Finally, the analysis will indicate how the Yuan style was influenced by the Song Dynasty (960-1279), and how it in turn subsequently had an influence on Ming aesthetics (1368-1644). The number of jade animals known of the Yuan Dynasty remains very small, largely due to many surviving jade objects and heirlooms are difficult to be properly dated because of lack of evidence and definite provenance. Furthermore, the Yuan Dynasty was extremely short in duration (98 years¹), and it was ruled by people of steppes coming from far away in the North to China, which has always been largely segregated from mainstream of full historical studies in China, let alone much cultural appreciation by the Chinese.

The framework and conceptual tools in this thesis for the analysis of the animals in three-dimensional forms of art derive from many historians, artists, scholars and zoologists. Studies of history of art based on artefacts are a scientific research. It is different from traditional art appreciation and religious art fetishism. Its aim is to try to understand insights of arts by using comparative sciences. It needs a wide range of knowledge to understand every possible aspect of culture and arts during the Yuan Dynasty, then it goes finally to the artefacts themselves.

¹ The exact duration of the Yuan Dynasty has always been in dispute and discussion. This thesis has chosen to adopt the mostly accepted starting date of the Yuan period, when Yuan Shizu (the first emperor of the Yuan Dynasty), Kubilai set up the Yuan Capital in Beijing and settled down there in 1279.

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Research for this thesis began under the guidance of my supervisors, Mr. Nicholas Pearce and Dr. Alastair A. Macdonald. Without their enthusiasm for Chinese art, culture, history and science, I would not have had the opportunity to engage in this study of jade animals of the Yuan Dynasty at Glasgow University.

Mr. Nicholas Pearce, my principal supervisor helped in a number of most important ways. He encouraged my idea to carry out research into the art of the Yuan and related periods. He supported my interest in jade and the portrayal of animals in this material. He arranged for me to begin my studies with research work on the Hardinge Collection in University of Durham. His interest in and knowledge of Chinese ceramics and Chinese art in general gave me tremendous help with my studies. He managed my supervision when he himself was facing all the challenges of his position as the new Head of the Department of History of Art at Glasgow University.

My associate supervisor, Dr. Alastair A. Macdonald, was closely involved in guiding the more day to day aspects of my research. His careful advice on the inter-faculty nature of my research (between art and science) benefited my studies tremendously. His enthusiasm and urge for learning have been constant sources of inspiration and encouragement. My research has been enhanced by his knowledge of animals and the importance of history, and his sophisticated scientific and library research skills. His constructive criticism of my reading and writing encouraged my research to enter the sphere of scholarly argument. I am also indebted to him for his help in finding finance support for me at the start of my PhD studies.

It has been an especially difficult task for both of my supervisors, as my chosen subject did not directly coincide with their areas of research. Their patience and willingness to guide me towards possible solutions, when facing challenges of my subject has always been highly appreciated. I greatly admire their sharp and astute

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I hereby declare this thesis to be my own work.

Table of Dynasties

周朝 Zhou Dynasty	11 century – 771 BC
春秋 Chunqiu Period	770 – 476 BC
战国 Warring State	475 – 221 BC
秦 Qin Dynasty	221 – 207 BC
汉 Han Dynasty	206 BC – 220 AD
三国 Three Kingdom Dynasties	221 – 265
晋 Jin Dynasty	265 – 420
南北朝 North-South Dynasty	420 – 589
隋 Sui Dynasty	589 – 618
唐朝 Tang Dynasty	618 – 907
五代 Wudai Dynasty	907 – 960
北宋 Northern Song Dynasty	960 – 1127
辽 Liao Dynasty	960 – 1123
夏 Xiao Dynasty	1032 – 1226
金 Jin Dynasty	1115 – 1224
南宋 Southern Song Dynasty	1127 – 1279
元朝 Yuan Dynasty	1279 – 1368
明朝 Ming Dynasty	1368 – 1644
清朝 Qing Dynasty	1644 – 1911

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL REMARKS

In both the West and China, studies of the Yuan period (1279-1368) have been long neglected. Systematic research has only really begun to develop during the last decade. Before the 1980's, this period of history was either glossed over completely by historians in China (Fang Jun, 1994, p. 237), or was treated disparagingly by them, as they focused on the less appealing features of the Mongol's literary status (Endicott-West, 1989, p. 1). Subjects such as Yuan jade have not been the theme of any wholly comprehensive study, and there has been hardly any discussion of the various specific aspects of that art. This neglect has partly been due to the relatively short span of the Mongol Dynasty (Fang Jun, 1994, p. 252-253), but mostly to the traditional Chinese reluctance to acknowledge that any achievements were made during Yuan times (Watt, 1980, p. 15). As an example of scholars' scorn of the Mongol regime, it has been commented that the Yuan administration was not unlike a primary-school pupil's attempting to control a university (Lee Yu-kuan, 1972, p. 124). It used to be widely accepted that the Mongols' illiterate status and barbaric customs effectively discouraged their interest and ability in scholarly and artistic matters. Art in general was felt not to have been part of their vocabulary, not to mention jade, that precious stone, the admiration and working of which was considered exclusive to the roots of Chinese, not Mongol, culture.¹ "There is nothing there", is still the type of remark to be heard from some scholars when asked their views of the jades of the Yuan Dynasty.

In recent years, although this type of prejudice has been partially reassessed or relaxed, there are still significant gaps, leaving much room for a re-examination. There is still much to learn and analyse concerning art during the Yuan period. Clearly,

¹ For example, one of the most comprehensive catalogues published by one of the most well known institutes – American Heritage Publishing Co. has no mention at all jade during the Yuan Dynasty (Froncek, et al, 1969, pp. 66-83).

several aspects of the Mongols' tastes and concepts in art were different from those of the peoples they invaded, conquered and ruled. Evidence shows, however, that Chinese jade-culture was soon adopted by the Mongol rulers of the Yuan period, and jade perceived by them as a transmitter of sacred matters, able also to convey messages of power, authority, morality and philosophy. One form – that of animals – will be examined in this thesis

This thesis, in part, relies on the groundwork already done by Chinese and Western scholars, and summarises various aspects of jade in Chinese history. Also draws evidence from a wider number of historical acknowledge as well as art historical sources. The first Western book on jade, by the French Sinologist Rémusat, was published in the early 1800's (Rémusat, 1820.). Then the enormous joint-work on jade, with Heber Bishop as the chief editor, was published in 1906 being a collective effort to survey the world-wide jade-scene. This was followed by the great Sinologists Dr. Berthold Laufer. His works were greatly valued by the Sinologist Howard Hansford, who showed a keen and fresh interest in Chinese jade and related matters. His famous work of research on jade, entitled *Chinese Jade Carving* published in 1950, and his subsequent works *Chinese Carved Jades* in 1968, covered all aspects of jade, and has been regarded as one of the most comprehensive works on jade in the last century.

The most recent works on jade, such as *Chinese Jade Throughout the Ages, A Review of Its Characteristics, Decoration, Folklore, and Symbolism* by Nott in 1962, *Chinese Jade throughout the Ages - An Exhibition Organised by the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Oriental Ceramic Society*, published by Oriental Ceramic Society in 1975 and *Chinese Jades from Han to Ching* by Watt 1980, are also well known in the West. A number of comprehensive catalogues of jade in the last decade came from some of the most important collections, such as the Palace Museum in Beijing and the National Palace Museum in Taiwan, British Museum and other

European museums,² have also brought into light not only their collections, but also research on jade in depth, in which *Chinese Jade from the Neolithic to the Qing* (Rawson, 1995), *Jades from China* (Forsyth, et al, 1994), and *Complete Works of Chinese Jades* (Yang Boda, 1993) are regarded among the richest and most sophisticated jade catalogues. In the early 90s, Roger Keverne published a single work that combined the most authoritative contemporary jade research and opinion from the world's leading experts (Keverne, 1991), which well presented every major aspect of jade culture and its historical significance. These works have presented an extensive Western point of view of Chinese jade-culture *and* its implications.

In China, a number of scholarly works on jade have been regarded as crucial to research. As early as the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), definitions of jade were provided by the earliest and most reliable dictionary 说文解字 *Explaining Writing and Elucidating Characters* (Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 10). There are no surviving extensive publications on jade until the Song Dynasty (960-1279), however, when 考古图 *Studies on Illustrations of the Antique* was produced (Lu Dalin, Song Dynasty, p. 1). Although this book only looks at 14 pieces of jade, it has been regarded as the pioneering work on jade in Chinese history. It certainly conveys a thoroughly studied, distinctively Chinese view. It was followed by 古玉图 *Illustrations of Ancient Jades* by Zhu Derun in 1341 and 古玉图考 *Illustrated Investigations into Ancient Jades* by Wu Dacheng in 1889. These three books are regarded in China as forming the basis for any research into jade (Sang Zhixing, 1993, p. 1).

Various Chinese scholarly writings have thus provided images of jade objects, explained their functions, philosophy and principles, and supplied systematic evidence and explanations concerning them. Although their terms used for jade stones and jade objects are not always clear, and they did not have a solid scientific basis for their

² Catalogues such as *Chinetsche Kleinbildneres* was one of the fairly comprehensive ones published in Germany.

ideas, these ancient studies on jade constituted a worthy springboard for subsequent scholarly research. More recent and contemporary studies, by leading Chinese scholars, such as Yang Boda, Zhou Nanquan, Zhang Guanwen, Deng Shuping, Na Zhiliang and others, have immensely increased our knowledge of jade, both scientifically and culturally. Their valuable research into jade-culture has been a further strong basis facilitating my studies of jade animals.

This thesis looks not only into a rarely touched-upon, and certainly incompletely understood, matter, but also seeks, by applying the methods and disciplines of both science and art, to provide a comprehension of the deeper significance of animals in jade. Such an approach first began to emerge almost four decades ago. The Jessie and John Danz Lectures was established in the University of Washington, its aim being to bring together “distinguished scholars of national and international reputation who have concerned themselves with the impact of science and philosophy on man’s perception of a rational universe” (Appleton, 1990, p. 1). One of the main approaches of this concept of research is the study of something, say animals, that stands for or represents one thing but denotes something else. Studies of the perception of environmental symbols of this kind can sometimes find that certain kinds of behavioural adjustment can be seen to have priceless value in art. For instance, such phenomena as orientation and site selection can function efficiently only if animals can recognise not only the objects they see, the sounds they hear, the textures they touch, the odours they smell, and so on, but also their ulterior significance, which may be derived from complex aspects of the real external world. The scientific approach to the study of art, although still not widely applied, probably owing to its sophisticated inter-disciplinary techniques, has beyond doubt resulted in some unique achievements and discoveries concerning both art and science. It has been with a similar inter-disciplinary approach that the renowned sinologists Berthold Laufer and Joseph Needham and the eminent ethnologist Edward H. Schafer have produced a large number of published books on Chinese art, culture and history. These books have incorporated knowledge from zoology, botany, pharmacology, mineralogy, ethnology, folklore and philology in depth, and, by doing so, have contributed a great

deal to the better understanding of many important subjects, and to science and art generally, in many dimensions.

The same interdisciplinary art-and-science approach is employed in this thesis on animals in jade, in order to achieve a better understanding of the subject, not only from the artistic point of view, but also from scientific perspectives.

1.2 THE SUBJECT OF THIS THESIS

There are certain salient characteristics of this particular subject that have influenced my research. Firstly, the number of kinds of animals depicted in jade which are known with certainty to have come from the Yuan Dynasty remains small. Further more, a significant number of the jades in the Yuan court were acquired from previous dynasties, those of the Liao (907-1125), Jin (1115-1234) and Song. Owing to the recognised difficulties of dating jades, this can make the dating of particular jades more hypothetical than absolute. In order to avoid confusion and uncertainty, I have selected for study those pieces which do have supporting information from some official record or records, or for which other surviving ancient records have allowed my analysis to be made against a background of historical authenticity, and to thus secure social and artistic authority for the provenance or chronological derivation of the jade objects considered in this thesis.

Secondly, the Yuan court is well known to have produced jade ornaments, which reflect the multiplicity of styles and fashions of the artisans of all manners of nationalities and backgrounds coming as they did from throughout the vast Mongol Empire. This will be discussed in Chapter Two and Three. In addition, there were considerable developments in trade between China and Persia, India, East Turkestan, Korea and Japan during the Yuan Dynasty (Yin Zhiqiang, 1999, p. 56). Consequently, the arts of that time were absorbing various cultural influences stemming from the Chinese, nomad peoples, Byzantium, Islam, Buddhism and Taoism. These component cultural elements had a great opportunity to develop and exchange ideas with one another under the Mongol Empire. The jade industry was also nourished by these various influences. Apart from what was sent by the governmental jade

administrations established in Chinese Turkestan and the precious-stone carving agencies in the North and South, carved jade artefacts and ornaments were also paid as tribute to the Yuan court by peoples in Turkestan and India (Shen Defu, Ming Dynasty, p. 662). Jades, and in fact, arts as a whole during the Yuan period, were emphatically considered to be the product of the collective skills and insights of artisans of many nationalities (Zhou Nanquan, 1988, p. 60; Lee, et al, 1968, p. 1). Sadly, these international influences have largely been excluded from the mainstream of overall historical studies of China under the Mongols. More particularly, the Mongol or Yuan style in art has received less attention than it deserves, because of the ferocity and barbarity of the Mongol invasions and conquests, and the focusing of attention on these alone. It would be impossible within this thesis, given the constraints of the time and space available, to conduct a detailed academic discussion of all aspects of Yuan art. The thesis does not seek to cover all aspects of the art of such an enormous empire, my aim being to provide some insight into the depiction of animals in jade. My research has, to this end, attempted to identify distinctive elements in the jade animals made during the Yuan Dynasty, and to conduct analyses based on the available historical, scientific and cultural evidence.

Finally, and in a number of instances, realistically depicted jade animals will in this research be identified to their genus and, wherever possible, to their species. Various aspects of the biology and relevance of an individual animal are here provided, so as to reveal its historical and cultural significance. In turn, the elucidation of these aspects brings further insight into the importance of jade craftsmanship and the jade industry in the Yuan.

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

In the past, it has been rare to employ any combination of art and science theories in an attempt to discover or more fully disclose new, seldom glimpsed or barely conceived-of aspects of art history. The physical and chemical sciences have, however, been widely employed in examining paintings, ceramics, textiles, and many other of the materials used in art. Much less often have been the instances of the

biological sciences' contributing to the study of art (Wu Yugui, 1995, p. 8). In this thesis, animals, fish and birds are focussed upon, with the aim of trying to understand the nature and significance of jade animals in 13th and 14th century China, to seek an explanation of how animals were perceived then, and how their images were depicted. Historical records and art critiques through the ages, used in conjunction with studies of the relevant biology, have been utilised to guide and enhance my arguments as to why particular animals were depicted in jade in the ways that they were. Due attention has thus been given in this thesis to the significance of the animal as it physically was in real life, and also to what role it played in other art, and in literature and history.

During the Yuan Dynasty, the highly civilised Chinese states came under the occupation of the less-educated Mongolian people, and this produced the special characteristics and peculiar contradictions of the culture of the period (Lee Yu-kuan, 1972, p. 124). In some ways, this inevitably gives rise to interest in how the Mongols were to express their feelings, in contrast to the habitual ways of expression of Chinese civilisation both before and after the Yuan Dynasty (Dardess, 1978, p. 6). This thesis also makes a contribution to this question through its focus on the significance of animals to the Mongol rulers and on the effects of this significance on Chinese jade-culture during the Yuan Dynasty. My research shows that a close study of animals, one of the most important aspects of Mongol life, reveals a series of potential clues, not only to the specific ideas behind their depiction in Yuan jades, but also sheds light on Yuan art and culture in general.

The Yuan Dynasty was a connecting period, a brief link between the preceding and the following dynasties. The analysis in this thesis will, as a consequence, show how Yuan jade-carving style was influenced by the Song Dynasty and how it, in turn, subsequently had an influence on the aesthetics of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The framework and conceptual tools employed in this thesis for the analysis of the animals in three-dimensional forms derive from the work of many historians, artists, zoologists and scholars. This synthesis of art research and scientific research differs

from traditional art-appreciation and traditional studies of religious art-fetishism. Many aspects of the cultures and arts of China and elsewhere, and an understanding of Nature itself during the Yuan Dynasty, have combined to provide insights into the artefacts themselves.

1.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE THESIS

The foremost aim of the thesis is to present to the interested scholar of Yuan jades, and indeed of Yuan art in general, a preliminary manual as comprehensive as is currently possible of all the relevant information pertaining to jade, particularly to animals in jade, for the period of the 13th to 14th centuries. Secondly, it seeks to demonstrate, with regard to the relationship between man and Nature, how and why animals were depicted in jade, comparing this with their portrayal in other pictorial arts of the time. Following up extensive clues and potential clues not only to the understanding of Yuan jade animals as a discipline, but also to that of Yuan art and culture as a whole, the thesis seeks to make a direct contribution to a comprehension of the significance of animals in various aspects of art and life during the Yuan period.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODS

The jade animals considered in this thesis have been carefully selected from various collections and their associated published materials, largely from the two major Imperial Collections in Beijing (mainly the Palace Museum, Beijing) and in Taiwan (National Palace Museum, Taiwan), but also from Western museums and institutions (Appendix I: Museums). The 238 jade animals in 146 jade objects eventually chosen are from collections all over the world (Catalogue of Jade). These jade objects form a solidly informative body of material. They are also sufficient in number, good quality and range of motifs and styles, to have enabled my research to be feasible, convincing and fruitful.

The jade objects examined for my thesis are mostly animal figures carved either against a background, or together with picturesque groups of human beings and plants. They are often associated with stories, or of spiritual significance. Individual

animals set in full relief³ without any other accompanying images⁴ have largely been omitted from consideration, which means that many more jade animals, even including ones which have previously been attributed to the Yuan Dynasty, have been excluded from this thesis. My research has indicated that the backgrounds carved with the animal figures may provide some additional clues as to their date, by telling a story or alluding to some metaphor. Solitary animals, without other accompanying images to provide helpful hints, might well guide the observer into making a wrong dating, and the possibility of a wrong chronological attribution for such pieces makes them unsuitable in the quest for reliability that lies at the heart of this thesis's study methods and aspirations. Since the dating of a jade remains largely dependent on its depictions, style and function, and in the absence of any specific scientific dating method, it is extremely difficult to date jade convincingly.⁵ In addition to the jades selected, artefacts in other media related to my research, such as bronzes, metalwork, ceramics, paintings, textiles and woodblock prints, have also been employed. These provide information, which can be used to analyse the styles and motifs of the jade animals. Comparison of the jades with other forms of art, expands appreciation of the pieces, brings to light aesthetic and other possibilities concerning them, and reveals facts indicating the roles that animals played in the jade designs of those times.

³ What is here termed "full relief" is sometimes called "round relief". Both terms refer to a figure (such as an animal, human, flower, etc.) carved in a three-dimensional form. Consequently, the term "half relief" or "half round relief" is also used, referring to jades set in fairly high relief on a fairly small flat surface, such jades being mostly used for inlay. Terms such as "in relief" or "in low relief" are normally restricted to flat objects with figures (images) set in relief, as, for instance, a relief printing plate. Jades of this kind are therefore sometimes called "jade picture".

⁴ Less than half a dozen of the jade animals considered in this thesis are independent carvings in full relief (see Catalogue of Jades). Some are identified as an excavated jade, but most of them are used in this thesis for comparisons with their style of depiction rather than for dating purposes.

⁵ One of the largest and most authentic jade-animal exhibitions was held a few years ago that organised by the world's leading jade specialists. Its catalogue admits that dating "has always been a problem in jade collection. With today's advanced science and technology, it is not difficult to produce replicas," (Chung Wah-pui, 1996, p. 16). All animals in this jade exhibition were ones in full relief, without any other accompanying background to provide clues to help with the dating of them. Dating was largely based on comparisons between pieces with respect to design, pattern, other artistic features, motif type and amount of detail in the work, taken together with comparisons made with animals depicted in other media, such as bronzes, ceramics and paintings.

Although the problems of dating jades are ever with us, even in the case of those derived from archaeological discoveries (there have not been many excavations dated to the Yuan period), most of the jade objects collected in this thesis were selected from the Imperial Collections of the Palace Museum in Beijing and Taipei National Palace Museum, and each jade in the Imperial Collections has had a yellow label (a sign indicating it to have belonged to the emperor's collection) attached to it, which briefly states what it is, and from which Dynasty it came. The imperial system of classification has maintained this form from dynasty to dynasty (Yang Boda, 1998d, p. 26). The jade animals selected for this thesis, in addition to the yellow label, have a solid historical background and clear identity, largely ascertained or derived from other authentic sources. Owing to the rigour applied in the aim of definite identification of each piece, not many jade animals have been chosen from Western collections for presentation in this thesis. Normally, there is no way of proving the authenticity or provenance of the jades from such collections. In most cases, it is not clear where such jades came from, let alone what their precise date of creation was, even though some of them may have been smuggled out from the Forbidden City itself.⁶ Pieces which have given rise to different opinions as to their dating, will be individually mentioned and discussed.

Written accounts concerning our subject and based upon historical records are largely derived from the *History of the Yuan*.⁷ Recent studies in China on the Yuan increased from about 1980 (Fang Jun, 1994, p. 237), when several journals for Yuan studies were set up there (Appendix 2: Yuan Studies). A number of ancient texts concerning the Yuan Dynasty in terms of its history, society, politics, culture, traditions, philosophy and religions, have also been major sources of reliable information for my

⁶ It might be expected that it would be possible to find some jades in private collections in the West which were gifted to the collectors by Chinese emperors. I have, however, not found any jade animals of this kind made during the Yuan Dynasty.

⁷ *History of the Yuan* has been made much more accessible by its computerisation and presentation as part of the 25 Dynastic Histories on On-line by Taiwan Central Research Institute via Heidelberg University. It is a digitised version of the reprinted version published in 1976 by Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing (<http://sun.sino.uni-Heidelberg.de/sin/fulltest/const.htm>).

research. In addition, a substantial number of books concerning every aspect of Chinese jade have been consulted (Appendix 2: Yuan Studies). These materials have helped to form a historical framework, and have facilitated an understanding of the general significance of jade in Chinese culture and history, as well as of the specific influence of jade on the Mongols of the Yuan Dynasty.

The modern sciences of animal taxonomy, biology and ecology have also been employed wherever feasible, to identify which genus or species of animals from real life could have been modelled for the jades. This in turn has helped to explain the jades' significance in the society and culture of the time. However, it would be mistaken, and indeed impossible, to attempt to assign genus or species names to every animal depicted. The aim of this thesis is to search for the significance of the animal motifs applied in jade-carvings, rather than to generate a system of classification of animal species existing in China during the Yuan period. Identification of animal species is one of the methods here employed for looking into the significance of jade animals during Yuan times from a scientific aspect, but is not the sole aim of this study.

In order to minimise errors as far as possible, and to accord the maximum possible attention to the true nature of jades and of the animals depicted on them, I have interviewed a number of people with professional or academic expertise in the fields of jade and other Chinese arts (Appendix 3: Interviews). Their scholarly opinions and comments have enhanced my studies.

I stress again that my research is proffered very much as something of a preliminary study on jade animals, there being still so much to learn about the Yuan Dynasty world of jade and jade animals.

1.6 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

In order to make this work as conveniently accessible as possible, the thesis is organised with jade pictures alongside text and, appendices in volume two. The jade

pictures discussed in the text are later summed up to compose a major catalogue of jade in volume two, together with illustrations of artefacts and wildlife-depictions as a reference material.

Volume One is divided into nine chapters, and a bibliography.

The second chapter presents information on Chinese jade-culture throughout history. It reveals the philosophical background to jade in Chinese history, and the highly significant part that it has played in Chinese art. The Mongols' attitude to animals is surveyed in some detail, as is the depiction of animals in jade, and the political, social and aesthetic consequences. Attention is paid to ways in which Mongol appreciation and awareness were cultivated, and how they blended with Chinese ideas and cultural sophistication. The important symbolic significance of animals for the Mongols and Chinese during the Yuan Dynasty is examined in detail, laying the foundation for more intensive discussions in the ensuing chapters.

In these later chapters, the objects selected for consideration are grouped and investigated according to their functions, this functional categorisation being the most systematic available. Alternative methods, which involve trying to group jade animals according to other criteria, such as animal taxonomy or mineralogy, have proved to be futile at the present stage. This is because it is by no means always possible to classify the jade animals according to their appearance, not all the images being clear enough to be biologically identified with any precision. Secondly, it is because the mineral composition of the jade artefacts has not been a major concern of this thesis and, finally because it was concluded that a broader understanding of the portrayal of the animals could be given if they were categorised according to their functions and the roles that they played.

Each category is examined as an independent entity, and each is dealt with along certain lines. That is to compare its profile with those of contemporary artefacts in other media; or to compare its decorative scheme and individual motifs with similar

ones on other artefacts made during the Yuan period for which date and provenance are better established. Chapter Five is slightly different, in that it concerns the various combinations of elements for a particular motif in objects with the same function, all of these jade objects being belt-plaques carved in the motif of hunting scenes. Such motifs originated in, and were traditionally favoured by, the northern nomadic and hunting peoples of the Liao and Jin Dynasties. The distinctive fashion of the hunt for animals in those times and its depiction almost exclusively on belt-plaques, have formed a special group of jade objects. It is therefore regarded a coherent group, and is categorised as such.

Chapter Eight presents a discussion of the material covered in the preceding chapters of the thesis, and, in so doing, it gathers together the various individual threads of the comments made in each chapter, and arranges them to form a comprehensive argument concerning the overall aspects of naturalistic and mythical animal motifs. Each type of animal is discussed. The possible reasons governing the choices of these animals for depiction in jade are examined against backgrounds which vary in their historical, cultural, scientific and philosophical profundity.

This discussion is completed with an analysis of the Yuan animal-jades I have not included in the thesis. The types of animal depicted on these jades in some cases appeared in other media during Yuan times, such as textiles and ceramics, and seem to have had cultural and historical significance. They are, however, not found among the jades considered in this thesis. Reasons are put forward as to why they should be excluded, and suggestions made which may be a contribution to further research into this subject, if more evidence is found or made available.

The thesis concludes with Chapter Nine, which highlights questions arising with regard to the material investigated in this study that it has not been possible to answer definitively. By the stating of such as yet unsolved problems, new challenges for future research are identified.

Volume Two is composed of a catalogue of jades called “Catalogue of Jade”, a section entitled “Non-jade Illustrations” and nine appendices.

The second volume of this thesis contains the material constituents, which have formed the foundation of the discussions in volume one. As such, it is a part of the thesis which must be used constantly and with careful attention when reading volume one. Largely for technical reasons related to the printing of the thesis, all the illustrations of artefacts and wildlife can only be found in the second volume as a reference material. Thus the two volumes of this thesis must be kept open simultaneously, and consulted side by side.

The Catalogue of Jade contains pictures of all the jade animals described in this thesis. The pictures of jades have been chosen from photographs taken in museums worldwide, and from the publications produced for auctions and by private collectors. In the text throughout the thesis, the numbering system used for the Catalogue of Jade is as follows, e.g. Fig. 6-8, referring to the jade object number 8 in Chapter Six. In the Catalogue, each jade object is provided, wherever applicable, with basic data, followed by some concise descriptive information to assist in the understanding of the object’s appearance and motif.

The Non-jade Illustrations are composed of artistic objects depicted in the media of ceramics, drawings, garments, metalwork, ornaments, paintings, sculptures, textiles and wildlife in nature. The numbering system used for the Non-jade Illustrations throughout the thesis is as follows, e.g. No. 8, referring to the illustration number 8. These illustrations are discussed in the thesis, and compared with the relevant jade objects, with respect to their image or style. Only basic data is provided to indicate each illustration’s provenance.

Nine appendices include:

1. Appendix 1: Museums and Institutes Visited and Consulted (Abbreviation: Museums)

2. Appendix 2: Yuan Studies
3. Appendix 3: Interviews
4. Appendix 4: Journals and Reports on Tombs of the Yuan Dynasty Excavated in China Since 1949 (Abbreviation: Tombs)
5. Appendix 5: Jadeite
6. Appendix 6: Chinese Jades
7. Appendix 7: Colours of Jades
8. Appendix 8: Methods of Jade Carving
9. Appendix 9: Imperial Preceptors of the Yuan Dynasty - Records on the *History of the Yuan* (Abbreviation: Preceptors)

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Every effort has been made to present as thorough a study as possible of jade animals during the Yuan period. It must, however, be pointed out that certain limiting factors beyond my control do exist, which have restricted my access, or prevented me from reaching some of the material. In assembling the research material for the present study, I had to rely, to a large extent, on the co-operation of the museums with major collections of Yuan jades to supply me with photographs and relevant data.

Unfortunately, a number of my requests for assistance from these institutes received either no reply or no permission to see their jade collections. It is regrettable that some of the museums, which I considered most important to this study, were among those that did not respond or did not allow me full access. In preparing the analytical chapters on Yuan jades in this thesis, I have been dependent to a degree larger than wished on the examination of photographs of the jade objects, owing to the impossibility of examining the jades in person.⁸ Descriptions relying on photos can be somewhat restricted, and may sometimes not allow the complete identification or

⁸ It is forbidden for outside researchers to conduct research on any of the artefacts in the Beijing Palace Museum. I was only allowed to see two jade-lion finials at a distance of 1.5 metre (i.e. no touching, and no photographing), for a payment of 1000 *yuan* (about £77.00). Many of the pictures of jade animals considered in this thesis have been taken from the catalogues of the Beijing Palace Museum.

interpretation of a particular detail. This situation has, however, largely been remedied by the assistance gained from the texts of various publications and catalogues, and the comments of interviewees who have examined the pieces in question. Instances where this was not possible have been clearly noted wherever applicable, in an attempt to prevent any misconception resulting from visual ambiguity and uncertainties caused by indirect viewing.

The relative lack of archaeological evidence is another obstacle in any studies of the Yuan period. The Mongol rulers had a very secretive burial custom, designed to ensure that their remains would rest beneath the ground in peace forever, and not be disturbed by any future tomb robbery. The Khan Chingis (or Genghis), the first emperor of the Mongol Empire ordered that he be buried in a place called *Qiniangu* 起辇谷 (Ye Ziqi, Ming Dynasty, p. 60). The significance of this term or name, referring to some location, remains completely impenetrable. Subsequent to him, all other emperors and nobles of the Yuan had their bodies buried deep there, probably somewhere on the Mongolian grasslands, and in such a way that it left not the slightest trace of the burial site. This burial custom is recorded in *History of the Yuan* (Song Lian et al, 1370, p. 376). There were 18 Mongol emperors of the Yuan Dynasty, of whom 13 were buried in *Qiniangu*. There is no surviving record concerning the burial of the remaining 5 (Yang Jianyu, 1989, pp. 824-853). Mongol rulers of the Yuan period are said to have been buried with treasures when they died (Ye Ziqi, Ming Dynasty, p. 60). Chingis Khan, for example, is believed to have been buried with forty beautiful women, who wore precious clothes decorated with jade jewellery (Grousset, 1967, vol.1, p. 220), plus many valuables (Shi Weimin, 1996, p. 186). Although it is also argued that there was nothing whatsoever buried with the Mongol emperors and nobles, as a measure to prevent the possibility of treasure attracting tomb robbery in the future (Cai Xiqin, 1995, p. 181), there is no evidence to support this argument, simply because no imperial or aristocratic Mongol tombs have ever been found. There is only a symbolic mausoleum to the memory of Chingis Khan, built in Inner Mongolia in 1649 (Shi Weimin, 1996, p. 280). As a result of this situation, we do not have any known unearthed imperial jades of the Yuan Dynasty

from China. It would be a great step forward if the term or name *Qiniangu* could be understood, and the location of the imperial burial place thus be identified.⁹ The excavations that would naturally follow upon such a discovery would certainly provide archaeological evidence of great help for a deeper insight into the Yuan Dynasty.

A fair number of non-imperial tombs dated to the Yuan period have, however, been excavated (Appendix 4: Tombs). Some contained jade objects. Although small in number, these jades have provided important indications as to some of the styles and characteristics of the jade industry during Yuan times, and even of those of the Yuan court. Every one of these excavated jade objects with animal motifs that could be accessed has been examined for this thesis, and is illustrated and discussed in this study.¹⁰ Some have not been dated definitively to the Yuan Dynasty, but to a period of time such as the “Song or Yuan”, or the “Liao or Yuan”. Their inclusion in my research by no means devalues the work, since jade work as an art, even though it does in its own right have a distinctive philosophy associated with it, has never been isolated artistically or, within wide limits, chronologically. Undated jades which depict particular characteristics or a certain type of subject, can sometimes be of considerable value to an analysis such as is undertaken in this thesis.

My research in the realm of Yuan jades has been conducted mainly under the influence of the official historical records, such as the *History of the Yuan* and a number of other highly regarded historical works, largely written in the Chinese

⁹ With modern technologies, such as satellite photography and terrestrial magnetometer, it may become possible to detect and interpret disturbances of the soil on the surface. This technology is, however, still at an early stage of development, and it cannot yet trace tombs (Thomas, 2000, Interview). No technology at the moment can find a tomb by scanning the surface of the earth as a general survey. The archaeological discovery depends on a number of important factors, e.g. cultural and historical past, natural condition etc. There is no single method which could “see through” or “dig out” a hidden tombs without other element available (Réinfrew, 1991, pp. 61-100).

¹⁰ It remains possible that there may be some undescribed Yuan jade animals in museum collections somewhere. I believe that I have obtained all the jade-animal images, which have been published in official excavation reports, and I have even obtained some from incompletely published official excavations.

language. Works in Western languages, mainly in English, have also been extensively explored and consulted. Important additional sources from countries and regions such as India, Turkestan and Eastern Europe are sometimes quoted, although generally I have placed less reliance on these. I very much hope that this thesis will contribute to future studies on jade animals created during the Yuan Dynasty, and that the impact of other foreign influences can be more extensively examined. My study focused more on the cultural influences and exchanges between the Chinese, the Mongols and the other northern nomadic peoples.

Studies of the history of animal taxonomy in ancient China are still relatively young, and it is an area which has not been substantially explored in a scientific way (Guo Fu, 1999, p. x; Needham, 1965, vol.1, pp. 2-4). There appears to have hardly been any substantial development since its embryonic form as seen in *Er Ya* (Zhou Dynasty) (Guo Fu, 1999, pp. 140-141; Macdonald, et al, 1997, pp. 523-526). In addition, the extremely concise nature of the ancient Chinese language in classical Chinese works such as *Er Ya*, makes their description and depiction of animals, let alone of species, nowadays seem sometimes unclear. I have trodden with care in using the ancient definitions in this respect.

1.8 NOTE

The most modern romanization system, generally referred to as the *Pinyin* System, for the Chinese language has been applied in this thesis, except in the case of quotations or citations from works such as those published in Hong Kong, Taiwan and other Chinese societies in Asia, where other systems of romanization are employed.

Reference of a Chinese name is given its author's full name with his/her family name before his/her first name(s), as it is the Chinese convention. Reference of a western name is presented with its last name only.

Animals and plants are referred to on first mention in this thesis by their common names with their Latin names given in brackets, their common names alone being used thereafter.

CHAPTER TWO : JADE CULTURE OF THE CHINESE

In China, jade is deemed to be the foundation stone of Chinese culture (Yang Boda, 1998, p. 3). Archaeological evidence has shown that the earliest Chinese jade found so far is at least 8200 years old, far more ancient than any Chinese bronze known today (Yang Boda, 1998b, p. 3). The oldest bronze fragment discovered in China has been dated to the Yangshao Culture, about 6000 years ago (Ma Chenyuan, 1988, p. 2).¹ It then took another 2000 years, until 2000BC, before the early stage of the China's Bronze Age came into being. In other words, when jade already had certain profound philosophical associations, 8200 years ago, bronze culture had not yet even germinated. When bronze began to emerge and show some of its splendours, starting from 4000 years ago, evidently with some heritage from the fine achievements of jade production, there were already in existence a plethora of superb jade objects of sacred significance (Ma Chenyuan, 1988, p. 2). The latter was designed according to well-established principles and bore rich decoration, demonstrating a rich world of abundant skills and mature aesthetics. As history went on, the gem maintained its position at the heart of China's culture.

Compared with porcelain, jade and earthenware run one another a close race in their antiquity. In those remote times, when the lapidary was a fine artist, the potter was still primitive in terms of production, and trailed the beautifully wrought jades by well over two thousand years, before coming to make ceramics, bowls and vases (Goette, 1937, p. 299). At that juncture, Chinese ceramics were not worthy of comparison with the finer jades, which yearly left them far behind.

Other forms of art, except cave paintings, are of no value when comparing age of ancient jade-work, for the simple reason that they did not last long. Pictures painted in caves, moreover, are records of our ancestors' daily life, rather than a symbolism of power, virtue and glory, which is what jade signified from the very beginning.

¹ This dating is debatable in the archaeological world (Ma Chenyuan, 1988, p. 2). Some experts tend to date it to less than 6000 years old.

It is not possible to thoroughly encompass within the spatial limits of this thesis how enormously jade imbued every dimension of Chinese culture and history. Some salient points will, however, be mentioned here to try to demonstrate the scale of the topic, and to introduce my later subtitles. It has, in some Western works, been believed that jade was employed 4500 years ago (Rawson, 1992, p. 44). This assumption, however, has been disproved by archaeological evidence, the oldest carved jade object unearthed and known today being a white jade object in a shape of ring with a breach in Xinglongwa, northern China and dated as 8200 years old (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, p. 63; Yang Boda, 1998b, p. 3). Inevitably, its carving bears some primitive signs, but as an 8200-year-old artefact, produced at a time when most things, including human beings themselves, were still lacking in culture, it already presents an obviously exquisite technology and a developed ancient aestheticism. This strongly suggests that jade-carving had by then been developed for a considerable period of time, for the craftsmanship to have reached such a stage, at which it is now regarded as art, however primeval. It would, therefore, not be far-fetched to say that jade culture in China has a history almost 10,000-years long, and was perfected, from its birth independently in various tribes to its unified cross-China development, with a multiplicity of sources and manifold artistic insights (Yang Boda, 1998b, p. 3).

2.1 PHILOSOPHY OF JADE

According to the ancient Chinese dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* (Explaining writing and elucidating characters), jade is the most beautiful of stones (Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 10). There were 159 characters identified as having been associated with jade in the sense of sounds, colours and shapes even at that time. Jade was held to be a light with intelligence shining forth from the primeval world of stones. It is said to be endowed with the *wu de* 五德 (five virtues): benevolence, wisdom, justice, proper ritual conduct and faithfulness. It is benevolent because it is warm and moist to touch, waxy and oily in appearance, with an amazing lustre. It has wisdom because its attributes are of a strict and rigorous consistency. It holds justice because it does not lie about

its true nature and character. It maintains rites because it hangs down neatly by force of its own weight when carved into hanging objects. Above all, it keeps faith because it is true to its own essence and quality. In literature, it is placed in contexts that make it clear that beauty or purity is intended to be understood from its presence (Medley, 1964, p. 106). Another statement of its fine qualities, translated as charity, rectitude, wisdom, courage and equity, explains the associations as follows: charity is typified by its lustre, bright yet warm; rectitude by its translucency, revealing the colour and markings within; wisdom by the purity and penetrating quality of its note, when the stone is struck; courage, in that it may be broken but cannot be bent; equity, in that it has sharp angles which yet injure none. These neatly summarise the qualities attributed to jade, by Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, at various times, being a selection from the traditional Eleven Virtues, Nine Qualities or Seven Rectitudes (Gu Fang, 1996, pp. 14-15).

Jade in ancient China was considered as the essence of cosmic, power and virtue, rather than merely as a precious stone (Wenley, 1946, p.1; Lin Zhiping, 1958, pp. 265-266). Even the smallest fragment of it was regarded as manifesting immense value. But the value was not a physical value like that of gold or diamond, which could be physically determined. Property was measured in gold. Diamond is assessed in carats. Jade, by contrast, had been held priceless. Nothing was available and could be employed to calculate its worth. Any attempt to estimate this holy function by judging it in terms of its material worth would have been a sort of blasphemy. The very idea of comparing jade with gold or diamonds was considered unthinkable. The transcendent worth of jade was beyond any worldly measure (Zhang Xiaofeng, 1985, p. 68). This has been the common attitude of the Chinese throughout China's thousands of years of history, and has grown to be an ever stronger and more solid part of Chinese culture.

Jade is like love. How much a girl is loved depends on how much she is adored. There is no measurement or standard available to quantify it. By the same token, it is not possible to measure how much jade is loved. We only know that the Chinese have

held jade in deep affection. It is endowed with a mystical significance that has no parallel among precious stones in the western world. Jade is described as the recipient of “the most fanatical and reverend adulation ever bestowed by man upon any of nature’s gifts”; “at every turn jade presents a fickleness, a mystery, a lure which from the beginning of time immersed the sense of mysticism and love of that which is of another sphere, so inherent in the Chinese even of the present.” (Goette, 1937, p. 23). This is not too far removed from an accurate description of the Chinese feeling about jade.

Jade is considered the cream of Nature, and is entwined with the divinity of it. This sacred stone is the bridge between this world and the other. Xiong Xiyuan declares it to be the epitome of the Chinese national and cultural consciousness (Xiong Xiyuan, 1994, p. 8). Jade symbolises virtue, spirit and feeling. Imperial jades represent the will and decree of Heaven. Jades for gentlemen proclaim noble morality; and jades of commoners indicate their pursuit of refined manners. The study of jade in China and Chinese culture opens up a vital and deeply philosophical world of art and religion. Further more, Whitlock was willing to call studies on jade as “mythology” in Chinese culture (Whitlock, 1934, p. 13).

2.2 BELIEFS OF JADE

One of the most famous Chinese stories concerns an invaluable jade in the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 BC), and has been told to every Chinese. It is about a man called Bian He, who twice had his feet chopped off as a punishment for being accused of lying, because he insisted to two kings of Chu that he possessed a real and unrivalled piece of jade that he wished to present to them. The kings did not believe him (Gu Fang, 1996, p. 104). Bian He remained convinced that his piece of jade was a fine one, and very sad that the kings confounded right with wrong. Finally, when he approached a third king, Wenwang (r.689-686BC), the king sent for a jade craftsman who cut open the piece of raw jade, and showed it indeed to be of matchless pure jade! Moved by all that had happened to Bian He, the Chu king then named the jade

after him, calling it *He shi zhi bi* 何氏之璧 (The Jade of the Gentleman He). By then, Bian He was already a very old and fragile, and footless, man, who had spent a good part of his life fighting for recognition for a piece of jade - in effect for his faith and spiritual conviction. Stories like this are told to praise those who stand up for the truth, jade itself being a symbol of truth and virtue, things truly worth fighting for.

Due to the complex of Chinese attitudes to jade throughout the ages, jade has been used for all sorts of occasions. It was employed to represent superior power during the Neolithic, in the form of weapons, ritual implements and religious symbols (Chen Danian, Ming Dynasty, pp. 244-246; Xing Lihua, 1991, p. 63). Jades came to be widely used during the Han Dynasty for burying with the dead, to protect them, and lighten their existence, in the after-life (Tsiang, 1983, p. 9). While the use of ritual and burial jades still continued, human and animal figures in jade came to flourish during the Six Dynasties (220-589), mostly mythical characters embodying people's longing to obtain supernatural powers (Forsyth, et al, 1994, p. 257). During the Tang Dynasty, jades were known to have enriched Chinese culture and its given rituals and morality, especially in the imperial court, pouring in from Khotan via trade routes to places of jade production (Schafer, 1963, p. 231). Roughly from the Song Dynasty onwards, people made jades imitating the ancient beauty and charm of archaic bronzes and Neolithic jades, enchanting the emperors with them (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 220). The undying magnificence of the past was reflected in jades. Although this primarily spiritual stone later became more and more an indicator of material wealth with some secular function and taste, being made to suit the emperors' extravagant life-style, jade has never lost its claim to mysterious and mythical power, and it was the focus of certain Chinese beliefs, behaviour and aspects of the psyche.

Originally coming from spiritual beliefs, jade is regarded as an ultra-material (or supra material), and is recorded on occasions to have been eaten at various periods. It was thought of as an elixir of life (Zhao Songling, 1992, p. 79). In legend, it was held that, man who ate jade for a year like this would be able to dive into water without being wet, and jump into fire without being burnt (Ge Hong, Warring State, p. 7). This was

nothing more than a notion that eating jade would enable one to attain immortality. It was reckoned in the Ji Dynasty (265-420) that swallowing jade or “jade juice” from sacred rocks could make a man invisible or transmute human beings so that they were no longer restricted by the forces of gravity, and were thus able to fly through the air (Ge Hong, Warring State, p. 2). Deng Shuping believes that this “jade juice” is Chalcedony, without providing any evidence (Deng Shuping, 1984a, p. 66). Regardless of the place of birth of the “jade juice” which was not identified by Ge Hong, Chalcedony grows in hydrothermal metamorphic rocks, according to mineralogy (Dong Zhenxin, 1995, p. 371). Agate and Opal can also develop in a similar environment of volcanic construction (Dong Zhenxin, 1995, p. 373; Luan Bingao, 1984, p. 139). Therefore, it could have been a number of possibilities of the identity of the “jade juice”, if there was a real thing called “jade juice”. Jade was recorded in 本草綱目 (*Compendium of Roots and Plants*) of its plain taste and non-poisoning nature by Li Shizhen (Li Shizhen, Ming Dynasty, p. 627). Li Shizhen prescribed that white jade, plus red jade should be taken when ground into powder, with rice-wine and juice of ginger and spring onion. It was supposed to cure stomachache and breathless (Li Shizhen, Ming Dynasty, p. 627; vol.1). He also reckoned that the best jade for medicine was from Khotan, with appearance of white lard and pure sound when struck. Whether this worked or not is beside the point here! The point is that jade was believed to have such an effect.²

Secondly, jade was sometimes reckoned a substance not necessarily to prevent the living from dying, but to stop the dead from decaying (Goette, 1937, p. 231). Apart from tomb jades used to close the nine openings of the body, jade eaten up before death was believed to be able to make the body almost as translucent as jade, and prevent it from rotting (Liu Datong, Song Dynasty, p. 294). A person who, as mentioned above, had eaten 100 or so catties of jade might eventually die like everybody else, but, it was claimed more moderately, his body would still not decay even after seven days exposure to the air before burial (Deng Shuping, 1984a, p. 66).

² The philosophy of ancient Chinese medicine was to emphasise the sole function of a great interdependence of the man and nature (Needham, 1970, p. 268), which may look astonishing from modern scientific point of view.

There were less dramatic ways of using jade beneficially, we are told, than by eating it. A record in the collector Sir Charles Hardinge's notebook says that green jade could cure period pains, and get rid of the bleeding and sweat, if it were hung from around the neck and touching the stomach. Furthermore, it could help against dropsy and fibrosis (Hardinge, H-21).³ It is also noted by Goette that jade in Spanish America was called *piedras hijadas*, and was used to try and cure spleen stones (Goette, 1937, p. 24). It was believed that jade made into amulets and placed over the kidney would be a remedy for diseases of that organ (Hansford, 1950, p. 2).

2.3 DEFINITION OF JADE

2.3.1 Phraseology

The Chinese term for jade, *yu* 玉 is a word often used loosely to refer to a range of different jade-like materials. In the broad sense, it may indicate any precious or “beautiful stone”, *mei shi* 美石. In ancient times, stones, due to their hardness, toughness and other desired qualities were employed by Chinese ancestors to make into simple tools for digging, chopping or cutting purpose (Yang Boda, 1994, p. 001). Gradually, the use of stone evolved in certain directions from work functions to decorative objects. Stones with pleasant colours and of pleasant appearance were the first to be chosen for carving or polishing, however primitive. When this happened, the “work stones” being distinct in appearance, the ornamental stones were categorised as *yu*, “jade”, in the early sense of the term. There were, of course, no standardised rules for which stones were to be regarded as beautiful enough to be jade, or which not. But archaeological evidence shows that stones such as crystal,

³ Hardinge notebooks, together with the author's collection of over 2,500 Chinese jades were gifted in 1960, to the Oriental Museum, Durham University by Sir Charles Hardinge (1878-1968) (Pearce, 1996, p. 114). As a petrologist, Hardinge was fascinated with Chinese jades and various hardstones carved as artifacts. His 36 volumes of notebooks are also a remarkable collection of world wide knowledge of jades with immense value. Parts of these notebooks are divided into various fields of information, such as “Mineralogy”, or “General A-Z” without giving detailed provenience of each piece of information, and page numbers of either original information nor Hardinges' own notes are not always cited or employed. H-21, for example, is one of these. Therefore, it is not always possible in H-21 to find out details of provenience.

agate, chalcedony, jasper, serpentine, turquoise, etc., were among the first chosen to be appreciated by the term jade (Yang Boda, 1994, p. 002). However different these stones are, including gem-stones, precious and semi-precious, of various kinds, they share something in common, though varying to degrees, being hard and long-lasting and, to the ancient Chinese, pleasant to look at.

In the strict definition of later ages, it is recognised and agreed that only jade from Khotan and Yarkand, Chinese Turkestan, qualifies as “true jade” - *zhen yu* 真玉 (Yang Boda, 1994, p. 006). Archaeological research shows that burial jades from the Fuhao Tomb in Henan Province, dated to the Shang Dynasty (16th-11th centuries BC), already include quite a number of true jades (Zheng Zhenxiang, et al, 1982, p. 50). They must have been transported from Khotan and Yarkand to Henan during the Bronze Age. Any other beautiful stones are regarded as “non-true jade”, *fei zhen yu* 非真玉, although many of them have also been widely accepted as jade throughout history and share certain striking characteristics with the true jade (Yang Boda, 1994, pp. 006-007). The Chinese of the past worked on various beautiful stones, compared their qualities and sifted out the best of them for a long time before finally reaching their common consensus of what was true jade. It has been summarised as having three unique qualities that no other stones can match. They are a), moist and mild with lustre; b), translucent with oily appearance; c), a pure and fresh reverberating sound when struck. The only stone, which possesses all these three qualities, is the jade from Khotan and Yarkand (Yang Boda, 1994, pp. 006-007).

The jade from Khotan and Yarkand, regarded as True Jade is called Hetian Jade or Khotan Jade (*He tian yu* 和田玉) in Chinese. Yarkand and other jade mines or jade producing areas in Chinese Turkestan are fairly small. Khotan, comparatively speaking is the major jade area, and the jade there is of the best quality. For that reason, the jade of Chinese Turkestan is generally lumped together under the term Khotan Jade. Confusingly sometimes, there is another popular term for this kind of jade, Yutian Jade (*Yu tian yu* 于阗玉), from ancient Yutian Country, which term has been replaced by or exchangeable used with Khotan Jade nowadays (Tang Yanling, et

al, 1994, p. 7). Yutian County was famous for its Yutian Jade for a very long time. It was recorded in the *History of the Song* for its famous jade (Tuotuo, et al, 1345a, p. 14106). In the Qing Dynasty, the Qing Guangxu Emperor (r.1875-1908) in 1883 set up the Hetian Administration, directly under the central government (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 006; Millward, 1998, p. 180). The name Hetian has been used officially instead of Yutian ever since then, although it still retains the name “Khotan” in Turkic locally. In present times, ancient Yutian Country is now Hetian County, in which there is a small village still called Yutian (*Keriya* in Turkic), about 100 kilometres east of Hotan, capital of Hetian County, under the government of Hetian Prefecture, Xinjiang Autonomous Region in China.⁴ Hetian is the Chinese way of pronouncing Khotan, the first letter, K, of Khotan being omitted or diminished in the Chinese pronunciation, hence “Hotan”. With a small variation in the second syllable of “Hotan”, the word “Hotan” is then pronounced “Hetian” in the Chinese language proper. True Jade has thus two names in Chinese, in accordance with its two terms of origin: Hetian Jade (*He tian yu* 和田玉) and Yutian Jade (*Yu tian yu* 于阗玉). Both are well known terms, and refer to the same thing from the same place.

However, certain other precious stones with some jade characteristics from eastern and southern China, are, held to be “non-true jade” rather than “false jade”, as they are also immensely treasured as manifestations of Chinese civilisation throughout history. Hansford, therefore, suggests leaving the Chinese term *yu* 玉 (jade) untranslated, in order to avoid misunderstandings caused by indiscriminate translation of the term, unless there is more detailed specification attached to the mention of it (Hansford, 1950, p. 3).

⁴ *Atlas of the People's Republic of China* consulted for this thesis gives the autonomous regions of the minorities such as those of Xinjiang in the Chinese language in Romanisation or/and English or/and local languages. This inconsistency sometimes makes it difficult to trace the roots of place-names. Nevertheless, this atlas, compared with most other maps of China, which often employ a single language, making it impossible to trace any historical derivation of non-Han (non-Chinese) names at all, is widely regarded one of the best atlases of China so far available (Sun Xiudong, 1989, p. 29).

However, the English term “jade” in this thesis is employed purely for its familiar and customised usage in the west. It therefore includes both the best jade from Chinese Turkestan and other attractive stones also called jade in the broad sense of the word.

By lexicological analysis, Goette has attempted to prove that jade was not known to Europeans until at least after the discovery of America by Columbus (Goette, 1937, pp. 24-25). He has managed to trace back the word “jade” in English, and by examining various linguistic aspects, to have discovered its roots in American Spanish, Latin, Greek, Italian, French and English. It seems to have originated from the term *piedras hijadas*, which evolved into *piedra de ijada*, *iada*, *ilia* and *pierre de l’ejade*. The English language did not have any word for jade until recent centuries, other than the borrowed Chinese word *yu*, “jade”. Before the sack of the Summer Palace in Beijing, by Anglo-French forces, in 1860,⁵ all worked green stones with any shine to them known in Europe were popularly put under the general heading of jade. No further detailed qualities were required (Kelemen, 1946, p. 1). At the same time, the Chinese, even those with a profound knowledge of jades, have also termed many kinds of beautiful stone “jade”, without any further classification of the stones’ specific nature, especially when they have been carved into artefacts, although the reasons for this lack of specific differentiation have been different from those of the European ignorance discussed above.

In 1863, Alexis Damour, a French scientist, is said to have been the first to study jades, once looted from Beijing, from the mineralogical point of view, and reached a conclusion concerning jades that placed them in two categories: Soft Jade (*ruan yu* 软玉) for the jade from Khotan, mineralogically termed nephrite, and Hard Jade (*ying yu* 硬玉) for the hard stone from Burma, mineralogically termed jadeite (Damour,

⁵ China in middle of 19th century was experiencing a series of invasions by Russia, Britain, Germany, Italy, France and Japan, (Overy, 1999, p. 232) and was overwhelmed in a full-scale war. The Summer Palace and the Forbidden City in Beijing were several times burnt and plundered by the foreign invaders, and numerous treasures of Chinese civilisation were destroyed or looted by the enemies.

1863, p. 34; Luan Binao, 1989, p. 23; p.109). Nephrite, the Soft Jade, is 6-6.5 on Mohs' scale and jadeite, the Hard Jade, 6.5-7.0.

Damour's taxonomy of jades based on their hardness was, to start with, a little too simple to distinguish the many different kinds of jades of various hardness. Jade, in the Chinese broad sense, as mentioned above, includes quite a number of beautiful stones, among which the Soft Jade, called nephrite by Damour, is considered the best, but only one of them. Secondly, jadeite has in recent centuries been imported from Burma, and has been called Burma Jade. It did not appear in large quantities in China until after the end of the 18th century (Zhang Lanxiang, 1997, p. 71). Rather confusingly, it has been variously reported from time to time that Burma Jade was known as early as the 13th century in China (Goette, 1937, p. 46), and that Burmese jade mines were not discovered in Burma until the 1870s (Mo Tai, et al, 1993, p. 18; Luan Binao, 1989, p. 98). Detailed discussion on Burma Jade can be seen in Appendix 5: Jadeite. However, this Hard Jade is not considered properly Chinese, and certainly does not have any philosophical import whatsoever for the Chinese, its only value being its exotic rarity and a certain amount of material worth (Yu Pin, et al, 1993, p. 28). Finally, jades seen in China vary in hardness from Mohs' scale of 2.0, such as the *Xiuyanyu* jade, a species of serpentine (2.5-4.0 on Mohs' scale) produced in Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 23; p.146), to 9.0, and the *Gangyu* jade, corundum (9.0 on Mohs' scale), produced in Southern China and Chinese Turkestan (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 39). It is therefore not appropriate to classify Chinese jade into only two categories, hard and soft, unless one is talking solely about jadeite and nephrite.

For this thesis, jadeite is not a major topic of discussion as far as ancient Chinese jade culture is concerned. Scientific research does not have hard evidence to show that jadeite appeared, or was known, in China before the end of 18th century imported or gifted from Burma (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 97; Needham 1959, p. 665). Imperial collections throughout the Chinese history have demonstrated that the Qing Court Collection (1644-1911) is the only collection among all the dynastic jade

accumulations that had jadeite artworks (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, Interview). It is reasonable to say that not only has jadeite a foreign identity, but that it has had a very short history in China; and except for some of its material value, jadeite was not a part of Chinese culture in any historical sense, unlike nephrite and other Chinese jades. Nevertheless, jadeite became popular among the Chinese in the last hundred years or so, and it has been studied as a proper jade along with Chinese jades, especially as a jade parallel with nephrite in terms of its gem quality. Therefore an appendix attached to this thesis presents extra research on jadeite (Appendix 5: Jadeite).

While the Hard Jade, jadeite, is nowadays almost excluded from considerations of Chinese jade culture, except as far as its material value is concerned, the term of the Soft Jade, on the other hand, is happily retained, and, however inaccurate, has come to be accepted (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 108). It is not accurate, since the Soft Jade is not always soft. Recent research shows that Khotan Soft Jade is 6.5-6.9 on Mohs' scale in hardness, and some kinds of it from New Zealand are even 7.0 on Mohs' scale (Tang Yanling, 1994, p. 109). Nevertheless, the inaccurate term has been accepted, probably because of nephrite's "soft" appearance. Its particularly oily look, sometimes deemed "peculiar", radiates a strong sensation of "soft to touch" when it is properly polished. Pictures of some well-buffed jade objects collected for this thesis successfully demonstrate this aspect, conveying an immediate impression of a certain luxuriant sensuality, with a rich and creamy feel. The characteristic of a soft appearance but tough nature does not seem to be found in any other stones (Tang Yanling, 1994, p. 111).

Names of Chinese jades other than Khotan jade (nephrite) are often given according to where the stones were originally found or produced. For example, Khotan jade from Khotan; *Dushan yu* 渎山 (Dushan jade) from Dushan Mountain, Nanyang City, Henan Province. It is therefore sometimes called *Nanyang yu* 南阳玉 (Nanyang jade) as well, which is allanite with a group of minerals of plagioclase, diopside and chromite. *Qilian yu* 祁连玉 (Qilian jade) from the Qilian Mountain, Gansu Province, is a kind of serpentinite sometimes with many different colours of yellow, green, blue

and white, brown and yellow and so on. Lantian Jade (*Lantian yu* 蓝田玉) discovered in Lantian, Shaanxi Province, is formed by ophicalcite which sometimes is highly veined, and seen with serpentinite schist (Wu Shuren, 1990, p. 469). Other jades like Beijing White Jade (Beijing), Guizhou Jade (Guizhou Province) and Taiwan Jade (Taiwan) are all composed of quartz, and therefore called quartz-type jades.

Stones such as turquoise, lapis lazuli, agate, malachite, chrysocolla, jasper and chalcedony are also considered to be jades in the general sense (Appendix 6: Chinese Jades). All these precious stones have been employed since ancient times in China, and have formed important parts of the Chinese jade culture (Yang Boda, 1994, p. 002). Among them, True Jade - Khotan jade, the Soft Jade, is the crown of them all.

2.3.2 Mineralogy

In ancient China, there was no geology or mineralogy or anything of the kind to create a scientific scheme for analysing what the true jade was, appearance being the only criterion, one which could sometimes easily cause confusion with other stones of similar characteristics. Even in modern science, jade is a very complex material, and a comprehensive account of its composition, properties and occurrence is lacking (Middleton, et al, 1995, p. 413). Furthermore, jade is a rather broad term, as discussed above, and the nomenclature of jade and jade-like materials is not altogether straightforward. However, the science world has reached a general consensus, agreed between the mineralogist and geologist, which is that jade is a synonym for two quite distinct minerals, nephrite and jadeite (Middleton, et al, 1995, p. 413). (Appendix 5: Jadeite).

Nephrite ($\text{Ca}_2\text{Mg}_5[\text{Si}_4\text{O}_{11}]_2[\text{OH}]_2$), known to Chinese as the true jade or Khotan jade, is a species of its own (Hardinge' Note. vol. 6. np). It is composed of two

principle minerals, tremolite and actinolite belonging to the amphibole family⁶ (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 66). Among these minerals, tremolite makes up almost 99% of the composition of the pure white Khotan jade and about 98% of the greenish white Khotan jade. Nephrite needs very special conditions for the formation of it with a high concentration of its gem quality, and both Middleton and Tang Yanling (et al) have given it a full review of its mineralogical construction, showing the extreme circumstances needed for producing nephrite of ideal quality (Middleton, et al, 1995, pp. 413-422; Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, pp. 66-107).⁷

As for the other stones of jade quality mentioned above, each has its individual mineral composition. Serpentinite,⁸ for example, is itself well known as a jade simulant and ornamental stone (Middleton, et al, 1995, p. 414). In another case, *Dushan Jade* is found to have a collective body of tremolite, diopside and actinolite (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 142).

2.3.3 Physical Properties

One may summarise some standards used in ancient China for jades, although these tend to be more philosophical than scientific, certainly in ancient times. “Complete” (*quan* 全) was a standard to categorise jade with “pure color” in the Han Dynasty, and it was the jade used by the Emperor (Zheng Xuan, Han Dynasty, p. 2; vol. 41). *Si yu yi shi* 四玉一石 in the ratio of four jade and one stone) was a jade of quality used by nobles in the court. Records continued that *yu duo ze zhong, shi duo ze qing* 玉多则重, 石多则轻 (It is heavier when more jade, and lighter when more stone).

⁶ *Amphibolos* in Latin means “of many interpretations”, “vague”. When this term was “borrowed” to designate mineral composition, it was clear enough for indicating the stone’s “not very clear” complexity and changeable nature (Tang Yanling, 1994, 066).

⁷ Details of mineralogical construction of nephrite can be found in “*The Mineralogy and Occurrence of Jade*” (Middleton, et al. 1995) and *Chinese Jade from the Neolithic to the Qing* (Rawson, 1995) and *Zhongguo Hetian Yu* 中国和阡玉 (Hetian Jade in China) (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994).

⁸ Serpentinite is composed of an ultrabasic rock, especially peridotoid pyroxenide. Serpentine schist is often found at the edge of ultrabasic in the form of thin layers or attenuate sheets, among which speckles of green, black, red and yellow are sometimes seen. Serpentine is thus used as an exchangeable term with serpentinite when referring to a jade simulant (Middleton, et al, 1995, p. 414).

In terms of size a jade of one cubic *cun* 寸 (A Chinese measurement of length. One *cun* is about 3.33cm)⁹ weighs 7 *liang* 两 (A Chinese measurement for weight. One *liang* was 0.0313 kilo),¹⁰ and a stone of the same volume weighs 6 *liang* 两. Although vague in sense, these measurement standards show that ancient Chinese were able to tell the differences of weight, feel and appearance between jade and stone.

- ***Gravity, Hardness and Tenacity:***

Modern science has given us a better and clearer view, by presenting the inner structure of jade. Nephrite, measured by hydrometer on 2.95-3.1 gravity, is quite a hard stone (6-6.5 on Mohs' scale)¹¹ (Tang Yanling, et al, 1989, p. 109). It is too hard to be cut or scratched by ordinary metals. However, its hardness, compared with its toughness, is not unique or even exceptional. Its toughness is astounding. A story goes that a dealer in minerals, who wished to break a piece of nephrite about the size of 2 fists, placed it on the anvil of a large steam hammer used for forging steel. When the hammer fell, the anvil - not the jade - broke (Middleton, et al, 1995, p. 417). This extreme toughness is comprised of fine fibrous crystals in random orientation and closely packed together. Under the microscope, nephrite jade is seen with its fibres in needle shape or leaf shape, densely woven and matted like felts or carpets. This texture renders nephrite jade extremely tough (Tang Yanling, et al, 1989, p. 75).¹²

- ***Colour:***

Apart from nephrite's intrinsic quality of hardness and toughness, its range and quality of colours and textures are what it is valued for. It is found in a series of four basic colours - white, green, yellow and black, plus some transitional intermediary colours

⁹ One Chinese *cun* is about 3.33cm. But the values of ancient Chinese measurements varied throughout the ages.

¹⁰ One Chinese *liang* in ancient time was about 0.0313 kilo. But the values of ancient Chinese measurements varied through the ages.

¹¹ Some nephrite such as greenish white jade is said to be 6.5-6.9 on Mohs' scale. This is almost as hard as quartz (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 109).

¹² Although nephrite is slightly softer than jadeite, its mechanical strength is so much tougher, in its woven texture, than jadeite which is more brutal to be broken (Tang Yanling, et al, 1989, p. 75).

such as greenish white, greyish white and so on (Tang Yanling, et al, 1989, p. 107). As actually found, it may also occur in pink, mauve, blue, grey, red and mottled variations.

The coloration of nephrite derives from the presence of additional minerals around it while in the mines and, from the composition of the jade mineral itself. The first circumstance can cause coloration of any surface coating or weathered layer on jade to modify its appearance and, sometimes penetrate into it, to a degree (Tang Yanling, 1994, p. 73). The latter circumstance is commonly caused by its own complex minerals, such as magnetite (green), phosphorite (light grey, yellow, brown and blackish dark), lamprite (yellow), epidosite (green), diopside (very light, hardly in any colour¹³) dolomite (white), picotite (dark green) and quartz (sometimes grey and light pinkish grey).

The surface skin, also called “jade skin”, of nephrite is particularly rich in colours, and the jade skin in jade-carving formed a considerable part of the jade repertoire after the Song Dynasty, and was employed for its various colours and found great favour during the Yuan Dynasty (Liu Datong, Song Dynasty, p. 259). It is possible to grasp the nature of the colours of the “jade skin” simply when one hears some of the terms used to describe it, such as “tiger-skin”, “deer-skin”, “autumn-bear”, “ripe dates”, “reed-catkins”, and so on. When this surface coating stays limited to the exterior, as the skin,¹⁴ experienced jade workers can mostly tell what true colour lies inside, by just looking at this external appearance. It is believed that pure white nephrite normally hides inside a “tiger-skin”, “deer-skin” or “autumn-bear” (Tang Yanling, 1994, p. 108). The jade object of Fig. 5-30, for example, show this “skin-and-filling” complex very well. They all have a warm brownish skin, delicately laid as a thin cover on the surface of the nephrite, and are cleverly employed in carving tree leaves, real-life tiger’s skin or deer’s skin and “golden autumn” patterns. At the same time, the

¹³ Diopside amphibolite is composed of amphibolite granules of very light colour (Wu Shuren, 1990, p. 535).

¹⁴ Sometimes when deep penetrations of coloration happen, the “jade skin” may acquire an undesirable discoloration adversely affecting the whole jade.

elegant white translucency of the “jade filling” is exposed from beneath the “jade skin”, to represent sunlight by its contrast of mild whiteness. More examples of this kind can be found in the Catalogue of Jade.

The colours of jade form a rich world of their own (Appendix 7: Colours of Jades). Due to very complicated chemical meta-effects, jades, especially nephrite, have a whole range of dazzling colours. Chen Xing, scholar who lived in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), summarised as many jade colours as he found possible, and provided a long list of vivid terms for those colours, classified by subjective observation as opposed to measured by any colourimeter.¹⁵ I mention here only a tiny proportion of his list of the colours of jades, so as to provide some clues of his approach: as blue as the water in a deep pond high on a mountain; as green as fresh mosses; as yellow as steamed chestnuts; as red as cinnabar; as purple as coagulated blood; and as clear as the sky after rain. In addition he gives: aubergine purple, shrimp grey, fish-stomach white, and pitch-dark black, etc. (Chen Xing, 1839, p. 72). (Appendix 7: Colours of Jades)

Favourite colours vary from dynasty to dynasty, and also according to individual cases, tastes and purposes. Green jade is believed to have been in favour in Neolithic times (21st century-771 BC) (Tang Yanling, 1994, p. 116). White jade was appreciated during the Warring States period (425 -221 BC). Yellow and red jades were admired in the Song Dynasty. And the Mongols of the Yuan period seemed to have had an omnivorous appetite for jade colours, among which the special white Khotan jade was clearly the mostly chosen by them (see later chapters). This fashion continued through the Ming Dynasty and beyond, until jadeite, a unique green of rice seedling, poured into the Qing Court late in the 18th century.

¹⁵ Chen Xing, courtesy name Yuanxin, from Jianying, Southern China. He inherited 81 ancient jades from his father, and named his study “Mountain House of Eighty-one Jades”. His book *Jade Disciplines* covers every aspect of jade, including jade-producing places, jade names, jade colours, forgery identification, quality studies, jade-working, and methods for imitating ancient jades. He is thought to have been the first to point out that jade craftsman in the Song Dynasty started the habit of dyeing jades with methods of artificial penetration (Yang Boda, 1998, p. 6).

The white Khotan jade described as Mutton-fat Jade, is highly treasured for its unique purity and ravishing beauty. In Chinese the term is *yang zhi yu* 羊脂玉. The first character means sheep or goat; the second, fat or lard; and the last, jade. It is so named because this jade was seen as looking like a piece of mutton fat: richly white in semi-translucency with an oily shimmer. It has consistently retained its esteem, however tastes may have changed from time to time, regarded as the best for its flawless and translucent appearance and waxy lustre.

In Western literature, there is a term for jade, which is written as *yang zhi yu*. This pin yin phrase has the same pronunciation as the pin yin for Chinese for Mutton-fat Jade. And it is interpreted as “sheep’s finger jade” (Goette, 1937, p. 278)! If sheep did have fingers, one would find it hard to imagine a hoof-coloured and mud-covered stone as pleasant to the eye, let alone of artistic value! Throughout Chinese literature on precious stones, I have failed to discover anything of jade quality related to the “sheep’s finger”. This gives rise to the considerable suspicion that the “sheep’s finger” is simply a mistaken “decoding” by some Westerner who misread the Chinese characters, being not very conversant with the Chinese language, or, more likely, simply guessing, wrongly, from the spoken version of the Chinese for Mutton-fat Jade. Both “mutton-fat” and “sheep’s finger” are pronounced *yang zhi*, even sharing the same spelling in Romanisation minus pitch-tone marks. In Chinese writing, the visual difference should have been obvious, “mutton-fat” being written 羊脂 and “sheep’s finger” 羊指. The first character of both terms means sheep or goat, but the second character of the term for “mutton-fat” is “fat” or “lard” and, that of “sheep’s finger” conveys the meaning of “finger” or “digit”. It would not be difficult even for any non-Chinese person to see the difference between the two Chinese characters *zhi* 脂 (fat or lard) and *zhi* 指 (finger or digit). However, it could be a mis-interpretation, for these two characters do appear similarly. Nevertheless, when correctly pronounced, the *zhi* for “fat” is pronounced with a Level (Pitch-) Tone, and *zhi* for “finger” in the Third Tone or Rising Tone. The two tones are vitally distinct for semantic purposes in the Chinese language.

A number of illustrations of gorgeous Mutton-fat Jade objects have been assembled for this thesis in volume 2. The skill of the craftsman has made the finished carving in this hard and tough material look indeed as soft as rich lard and as easily workable as wax.

A point that must be mentioned briefly at this juncture is that colour alterations occur in surface colour when jade is buried for a long time (Appendix 7: Colours of Jades). This has caused a great fascination of antique and archaic jade in/by collectors throughout history, as well as aesthetic conception and carving methods to make or keep jade skins.

2.4 OUTSTANDING FEATURES OF JADE

Nephrite has its own outstanding and unmatched characteristics. It possesses exceptional qualities of hardness and toughness. Its moist look with a peculiar waxy lustre makes it, when polished, always convey a creamy sensation to the eye and sense of touch. This also means that it does not allow of any exact polishing, by reason of its seeming to have a smear of creamy fat on its surface. This appearance of oil or of wax is called “jade moistness” (*yu run* 玉润).

It looks moist, not because it is wet, but because it is lustrous with a sheen of oily or melted-wax burnish. It appears warm, not due to its surface temperature, yet feels mild and gentle to the touch. It comes out as soft, not exactly by reason of its actual softness, but because its texture allows it to be polished to silky smoothness, so that it feels extremely fine and flawless, and of exquisite quality. Translucency, too, is one of the most desirable features of nephrite. Having a low concentration of colorant elements to absorb light, and being amenable to very fine polishing, it can give visual depth and the appearance of a translucent texture. Typical examples of all of these main attributes can be found in Fig.4-6 and Fig.5-9, a perfectly made, breathtakingly rich and dazzlingly extravagant Mutton-fat Jade.

The good quality jade allows white to have sheen of grey, but without any nuance of “downcastness” or gloom. It permits an oily or “fatty” surface, but not the greasiness of a piece of melted lard. It must be translucent, but not transparent. It has to be moist of appearance, but not like shiny porcelain. All these conditions make top quality jade extremely rare and precious, and, needless to say a valuable piece of art after its working.

The aesthetic appeal of jade is that it can be valued not only for its appeal to the eye, but equally for its seemingly unctuous feel to the touch. Thus, the stone can only be appreciated thoroughly when it is touched and caressed. The fullest sensation of aesthetic enjoyment is only to be obtained as the fingers run over the jade, at which point the message of the carver, communicated from his mind to the jade, is passed on to the person who has the feelings requisite for the admiration of it.

2.4.1 Sources of Jades

World-wide, there are about 120 known Soft Jade mines scattered through twenty countries on the continents of Asia, Europe, America and Australia, among which China, possessing 22 jade mines, is the most important jade-producing country in Asia (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, pp. 132-134).

The major source of the Chinese Soft Jade is along ranges of Kunlun Mountains, Aljin Mountains and Tianshan Mountains. And the most famous and best Soft Jade is Khotan Jade. Khotan is near the meeting point of two rivers, the Karakasx River also called the Black Jade River, and the Yurungkax River, the White Jade River,¹⁶ where jade pebbles are found flushed down and deposited onto the riverbeds. The rivers are situated at the foot of the Kunlun Mountains, a range that rises on the border of China proper and forms the boundary between Chinese Turkestan and Tibet. Altogether, there are 10 jade mines crowded in that area, including some in Yarkand district,

¹⁶ In some English literature, these two rivers are sometimes called “Qaraqash River” and “Yurongqash River” (Millward, 1998, p. 181).

about 300 or so kilometres north-west of Khotan (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, pp. 133-134). The jade from these areas is basically all of the same kind, composed of tremolite grown from amphibolized dolomite marble, a type of metamorphosed limestone rich in magnesium (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 174). A similar type of Soft Jade, though slightly inferior, in China is also found in Kuandian City (*Kuandian Jade*), Liaoning Province; Longxi County (*Longxi Jade*), Sichuan Province, and Liyang County (*Liyang Jade*), Jiangsu Province.

Another important jade mine is in Manas, less than 100 kilometres north-west of Ürümqi, capital of Xinjiang Autonomous Region. The Soft Jade produced there is named Manas Jade. The mine is situated in an area to the east of serpentinized ultrabasic rocks, on the northern range of the Tianshan Mountains (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 137). It is in fact jasper, of some quality of tremolite type like Khotan jade, and is known to have been in use long ago, even before the 14th century. Marco Polo in his book twice mentions something about jasper, in his accounts of his visiting an enormous area of Xinjiang during the late 13th century (Polo, 13th century, pp. 82-83). The stones he saw were probably Khotan Jade and Manas Jasper¹⁷. But he could not have known properly what Khotan Soft Jade was at that time. Jasper was apparently something he knew about and recorded in his “Travels”. Similar stones of

¹⁷ Marco Polo mentioned jasper and chalcedony in his *Travels*, saying, “jasper and chalcedony in plenty”, and that they “are exported for sale in Cathay and bring in a good profit; for they are plentiful and of good quality”. The stone he saw was probably both Khotan jade and Manas jasper. He was visiting the Khotan and Yarkand areas where Khotan jade is first mentioned as having appeared. But without any knowledge of nephrite or Soft Jade, he would not have known exactly what stone he saw there. Most jades have colours from dark green to a light leafy shade of green. Jasper also shares this characteristic. It would not be surprising if Marco Polo mistook Khotan nephrite for jasper. The second time that jasper is mentioned in his book is when Marco Polo travelled to “the chief city of the kingdom”, which he describes as having “used to be splendid and fruitful country, but it has been much devastated by the Tartars.” It could well have been the Manas area and what he saw this time could have well been real jasper. About 400 kilometres north-west of the Manas area today is situated a Mongol Autonomous County, which is a sure indication of the Mongol “Tartars” historical existence there in the past and gives some explanation of the “devastation” of the fruitful city “by Tartars” at that time. The area around the “chief city” of Xinjiang, Ürümqi, capital of Xinjiang Autonomous Region, used to be, and still is, one of the major fruit-producing areas both locally and nation-wide, even though it was once ruined by the Tartars (Sun Xiudong, 1989, p. 29). Chalcedony has not been reported found in the Xinjiang area (Dong Zhenxin, 1995, p. 371). Some chalcedony can look like some of the Khotan nephrite with shades of green, such as chrysoprase or plasma (Tang Yanling, 1989, p. 138). This is probably why Marco Polo thought he’d seen chalcedony in Xinjiang as well.

this kind, of tremolite from ultrabasic rocks, archived as found in China are Xichuan Jade (in Xichuan County, Henan Province) and Hualian Jade (in Hualian County, Taiwan).

Soft Jades are found in other places in China, such as the Xiuyan Jade (serpentine) of Liaoning Province, the Jiuquan Jade (serpentine) of Gansu Province, the Xinyi Jade (serpentine) of Guangdong Province, the Dushan Jade (feldspar-diopside) of Henan Province, the Lantian Jade (marble-ophicalcite) of Shaanxi Province, and the Mixian Jade (quartz type) of Henan Province (Yuan Zhan, 1995, pp. 16-17).

2.4.2 Making of Jade Artefacts

To carve stones, even in a very general sense, is to imbue spirit, imagination and universe into a material intrinsically sturdy, strong and enduring. Egyptians, for example, chose the best stone that they could find of the desired quality of sheen of unique lustre, such as marble, granite and quartzite when polished (Bienkowske, et al, 1995, p. 57). Or they made these stone “shine” by painting on polished stone surface with plains of flat colour.

Jade, especially the Soft Jade chosen during almost one hundred centuries of selection in China, bears all the attractions of such aspects as durability, charming appearance, alluring translucency and enticing feel, and, into the bargain, is associated with profound ideas and a rich mythology that have been deeply embedded in the Chinese mind. The carving of jades is a process not, merely of visual judgement, but rather of intuition. Hansford argues that the art and craft of the jade carver have enjoyed a reputation comparable to that of the goldsmith in the West (Hansford, 1950, p. vii). There is some truth in that. Jade carving in China, especially in ancient times, was not simply one of the Chinese handicrafts. A well-made and finely polished jade artefact can radiate a tactile impression. The artist feels the object more than sees it. His mind and heart are communicating through his fingers to the sacred stone, which in return provides him with inspiration, the jade object becoming a combination of the faculty

of art and of realised imagination. If the Egyptians' early carving was done to imbue morality rather than ideals (Bienkowski, et al, 1995, p. 1), the ancient Chinese did both at the same time with their jades.

2.4.3 Jade-carving

The words "carve" and "cut" imply the characteristics of having been worked principally with a knife or chisel. But jade was too hard to be carved or cut, certainly in ancient times, by a knife made of any metal, or using the power of the human wrist. The term "carve" or "cut jade" is therefore paradoxically inexact. The Chinese words *zhuo* 琢 and *zhuo muo* 琢磨 indicate precisely the laborious process of attrition with abrasive sands by which this very intractable material is fashioned to serve the needs of man. It was an independent profession, for example, in the Yuan court, its practitioners collectively coming under what was called the Jade Workshop (*Yu ju* 玉局) divorced from other carving business whose specialists were called Workers of Carving and Cutting (*ke xiao zhi gong* 刻销之工) (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2144). The English language has no specific name for the process. Keverne argues that the term "working" contains something of the implications of "carving" Chinese jade (Keverne, 1991, p. 343). Although "working" here has only partially demonstrated physical efforts and artistic procedures of making jade artefacts, it is more or less realised that to make jades is not a straightforward carving or cutting with sharp metals. However, "carving" or "cutting", as applied to jade, is a word that has been in general use for many years in English translations and writings.

Unfortunately, there has been hardly anything recorded in the whole of Chinese literature about the techniques of carving jade, until very recently. Making jades was always considered an insignificant skill compared with the great significance of jade itself for all Chinese civilisations (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 19). It was a tradition in which the carving skills were handed down from the master to apprentice. Because of this the process has not been recorded in any notes. This is probably because jade was used by emperors but made by slaves and artisans, who were not of a status to

deserve any artistic credit in ancient times. There is a certain amount known about ancient jade-carving techniques, however, mostly from Song Yingxing's *Things Opened Forth by Heaven's Ingenuity* written in the Ming Dynasty. In no more than altogether 147 characters, it seeks to provide, in an extremely concise manner, the entire body of jade-carving techniques throughout the whole of previous Chinese history (Song Yingxing, 1637, p. 465). Although this exceptionally laconic record is highly esteemed, and indeed provides some key clues as to how jade was carved in recent dynasties, says little of the more ancient techniques of jade production.

One of the most important and voluminous books ever produced devoted entirely to the subject of Chinese jade in any language, is *Investigations and Studies in Jade, The Heber R. Bishop Collection*,¹⁸ which has discussed every possible aspect of Chinese jade, including detailed illustrations of the jade manufacture in workshop (Bishop, 1906, pp. 1, 18, 28, 38). However, it was recorded that those illustrations were in fact based on sketches by a Chinese artist who was employed by Bishop to have managed to get into a Peking (Beijing) jade workshop, because it was very hard for anyone, let alone for Busheil, a foreigner, to obtain admission to any of such workshop (Hansford, 1950, p. 65). Although there may be some inaccuracies, these illustrations drawn by the Chinese artisti have won a huge credibility, mostly because what they depict as being done to carve jades in those days does not seem very

¹⁸ *Investigations and Studies in Jade, The Heber R. Bishop Collection* is a *catalogue raisonné* of the jade collection of Mr. Heber R. Bishop, of New York, a large part of which was subsequently presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in that city. It is believed to be a very special jade collection, originating from the imperial Summer Palace destroyed by Lord Elgin in 1860 (Laufer, 1912, p. 324). Most of these jades were manufactured in the court-atelier for imperial use only, and rank as works of the highest perfection that human skill may reach. For the preparation of the catalogue, the collector enlisted the services of a team of specialists, under the leadership of S. W. Bushell and G. G. Kunz, and the results of their labours are enshrined in two handsomely illustrated folio volumes, the two together weighing 125 lbs. One hundred copies only were printed, and these were distributed in 1906 to various crowned heads and the principal libraries of the world. Much valuable information, especially on the mineralogy of jade, is to be gathered from this work (Hansford, 1950, p. 4). But its usefulness is restricted by its inaccessibility to the majority of readers, as well as that its bulk makes it impossible to consult without some considerable measure of physical discomfort. The copy I have consulted is in the library of Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, numbered 74. One of the librarians slightly twisted her back while helping me carry this enormous book of two volumes weighing some 62 pounds each.

different from what was described by Song Yingxing in the Ming Dynasty, nor indeed from what is done nowadays (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 21). In Hansford's "*Chinese Jade Carving*", a series of photographs of jade craftsmen working at a jade workshop in Beijing taken in mid 19th century have demonstrated jade carving technique and tools at that time (Hansford, 1950, pl. I-XI), and they are not much different from sketches of jade carving in Bishop's book. The Yuan Dynasty came immediately prior to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), so one would perhaps not expect much difference from the Ming in its jade-working, not in the jades made by multi-national artisans in the Yuan court (Appendix 8: Methods of Jade Carving).

Generally speaking, to carve a jade object involves the following basic steps: the cutting of a large jade boulder into a smaller or desired size, the carving of designs in relief on the surface of the jade or the making of open-work patterns on it, and, finally, the polishing of the surface of the jade to cause it to smooth and shine. A number of tools are required to make these steps possible and achieve the desired quality. First of all, a saw called *la si* 拉丝, and consisting of a single strand of wire in tension between the ends of a bamboo frame, for cutting the jade; then a *tuo zi* 铤子, essentially a cutting tool made of steel or wrought iron used on a treadle lathe; and a *mo tuo* 磨铤, a large grinding wheel for grinding the jade, are needed, followed by a series of small tools for drilling holes for various shapes, and sizes and for detailed work. Finally, tools and materials for polishing jade, such as the wheel made of turned sandal-wood covered with and stout leather or gourd-skin and hemp for doing the final polish.

To enable all these to work effectively, the most essential thing was to have hard abrasive sand to help grind the jade, since there were no metal tools hard enough to actually cut or carve jade. Grinding was very much the prime occupation of the jade workshop. Again, as with the whole business of jade working, there is very little historical record of the abrasive sand used on jade. Archaeological evidence shows that quartz was long used as an abrasive to make jade objects-of-virtue back in Neolithic times (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 24). Song Yingxing also records a jade-cutting

abrasive (Song Yingxing, 1637, p. 465), which Hansford reckons to have been garnet (Hansford, 1950, p. 73). Terms for the abrasive sands, wherever they appear in old Chinese writings, also vary according to their original colours or their places of origin, and some are names taken from mythology. Hansford lists some of them, such as “yellow sand” (*Huang sha* 黄砂, probably quartz), “red sand” (*Hong sha* 红砂, crushed almandine garnets), “Guang sand” (*Guang sha* 广砂 - on account of its having been first received from that port (Guangzhou), “Treasured Remedy” (*bao yao* 宝药, perhaps calcareous silt or with loess), “Jewel Sand” (*Zhenzhu sha* 珍珠砂, probably ruby crystals from Yunnan and Tibet, but unknown to the Peking lapidaries.) (Hansford, 1950, pp. 67-69, 72). In short, a mineralogy was never involved in naming these abrasive sands until very recently.¹⁹ The choice of a grade of abrasive depends, however, on the work which the tool happens to be doing, and is very much a matter of what the work needs, although sometimes also of personal preference (Personal interview with a craftsman in the Beijing Jade Factory, 1997). Carvings, ancient and modern, were then ground out by the assiduous application of abrasive sands using tools of metal, wood, bamboo and leather (Appendix 8: Methods of Jade Carving).

¹⁹ Hansford lists 6 different kinds of abrasives with identified mineralogical names as follows:

1. Quartz sand for what in Chinese is called “yellow sand” (Mohs’ scale 7). This is believed to have been the abrasive usually employed by the earliest jade carvers, but is no longer used except in a few workshops, as a polishing medium with the wooden polishing wheel.
2. Crushed almandine garnets, for “red sand” (Mohs’ scale 7.5), but also no longer used for jade working except by apprentices.
3. Crushed black corundum or emery for what in Chinese is called “black sand” (Moh’s scale 9), this being the hardest of all natural abrasives except for diamond, and the one in general use for cutting and grinding until the introduction of carborundum in recent centuries.
4. Carborundum, “Canton sand” (Mohs’ scale 9.5), was so called on account of its having been first received from that port. It is an artificial product, crystallised carbide of silicon, first prepared in the USA by E.G. Acheson in 1891. It is a very efficient abrasive, and has now almost entirely replaced corundum in the jade workshops.
5. Diamonds (Mohs’ scale 10) are used to point the diamond drill, but for little else. The diamond-point is employed for the cutting of inscriptions, but this work is highly specialised, costly, and rarely executed in the present day.
6. *Bao yao* (宝药), Treasure Powder was used for the final polishing. Samples obtained in Beijing consist of fine-grade carborundum, diluted with what appears to be a calcareous silt, or with loess (Hansford, 1950, pp. 67-69).

Qin shui bao liao 沁水宝药 (“precious stone dust mixed with water”) is also mentioned by Hansford (Hansford, 1950, p. 72) and seemingly reckoned a powerful abrasive for the final polish (Deng Shuping, 1995, p. 78). But it is not known for sure what it was exactly (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 25).

To make a jade object was an enormously time-consuming and labour-intensive job. In the court of the Imperial Palace, it is recorded that sometimes it would take 9 or 10 years to complete one jade piece, and working day and night was the norm in the jade workshop there (Blondell, 1875, p. 411). The expense of executing such works, combined with the high value of the material, increased the cost of fine works in jade to an enormous sum. The famous Great Jade Urn made during the Yuan period is a classic example. It is estimated that if one craftsman had worked 8 hours per day on that jade, it would have taken 60 years to finish it; if a dozen jade carvers all worked together at the same time on the Urn, it would have taken them at least 5 years to complete the job (Gu Fang, 1996, p. 195). Another huge jade artwork in the Palace Museum, Beijing, is *Da yu zhi shu yushan* 大禹治水玉山 made in the Qing Dynasty, which took 10 years to complete (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 25). China's modern jade object "Long March", a giant sculpture, 7.3 tons in weight, 2.6m in height and 1.3m across, took 17 craftsmen of the Shanghai Jade Carving Studio one year to complete (Liu Jiting, 1997, Interview). The amount of time and effort needed to produce an artefact of jade has contributed extensively to its material value. Even today, with the aid of power-driven rotary tools, cutting-discs and industrial abrasives, the completion of a single piece of carved jade may take many months of labour.

CHAPTER THREE: JADE CULTURE OF THE MONGOLS AND ANIMALS IN JADE

The relationships between animals and jades in legend led to a large number of stories, as well as the nature of the actual design of so many ornaments carved from the revered stone. A profound historic background and cultural traditions have played an extremely important role in this specific aspect of art. This chapter will reveal step by step the attitudes of the Mongols towards animals and artistic matters. It will also disclose how the Mongol emperors sought to make themselves the legitimate rulers in China, with the aid and influence of Chinese jade culture, the artistic and political requirements. Finally, it will discuss the combination of the Mongols' artistic appreciation and sense of artistic creation as melded in with and assimilated in deeply rooted Chinese philosophy and civilisation. Animals depicted in jade of the Yuan period have demonstrated their great symbolic significance for Mongol society as well as their contribution to the development of Chinese jade culture.

It is recorded that jade was only known in India from the time of the Moguls, descendants of the Mongols, who unreservedly encouraged its employment there (Easter, 1903, pp. 9-17). The Mongols were first interested in "Moslem Stones" (*Hui hui shitou* 回回石头) before they became familiar with jade proper during the 13th century (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 84). The stone called Red Stone (*hong la* 红刺) was also regarded as very special. It was in fact ruby in the Persian language, a species of corundum (Luan Binso, 1989, p. 34). The term "corundum" originally comes from the Tamil language, "*Kurundam*", meaning "tough and hard" (Yule, 1886, p. 259). Only the Mongol emperor wore it on his hat, as a hat-finial (Tao Zongyi, Yuan Dynasty, p. 84). It was during the Yuan reign-period Dade i.e.1298-1307 that a very wealthy man was recorded to have sold a Red Stone of about 203.1 carats for the price of 中统钞十一万锭 (110,000 *din* of *zhong tu chao*) to the Mongol emperor (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 84).

Another stones recorded by Tao Zongyi were called *Dian zi* 甸子, the term for turquoise of the Yuan period (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1943), in three kinds: *Nishe bula* (你斯不剌), an ancient name for Persia, nowadays an Iranian city in the east of Iran, *qili mani* (乞力马尼), a city called Kirman in Iran and *jizhoushi* (蓟州石), stone from today's Hubei Province, China. These three places which the three stones were named after, were the places where the stones were produced as well (Luan Bingao, 1989, p. 122). Wilson argues to verify the dating turquoise to the Yuan period, not based on mineral deposits, but for the reason that there have not been many turquoise antiques unearthed from those places (Wilson, 1998, p. 34). This would require further research on the dating technology and archaeological evidence, rather than questioning the geological facts. There were a number of other hard stones recorded by Tao Zongyi, precious valued by the Mongols in Beijing, such as Cat's-eye (chrysoberyl) from Sri Lanka. These stones were greatly cherished and highly priced in those times, and were used as hat-finials both for commoners and Mongol nobles (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 84). Gradually, it became the rule for the Yuan emperors and their staff, on official occasions, to wear hat-finials made from these stones in the court.

The appreciation of semi-precious stones and stone carving was quite a significant part of the Mongols' lives. Jewellery made of agate, turquoise, lapis lazuli and other semi-precious stones were already very common for Mongol women during the 12th century, if not earlier (Boyer, 1995, pp. 36-125). However, most of these semi-precious stones found today were only carved and polished to make beads or earrings at that time, rather than to make them in complex shapes, such as adornments with animal or flower motifs.

It has been discovered that in Mongolia there is a big lake in the bed of which there is a huge quantity of agate (Wang Wenzheng, 1998, p. 11). Sardonyx, one species of agate, is produced there, and there is a very fine and beautiful thread-typed pattern in the stone (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 139). This filiform pattern is seen in many colours, and it makes the Sardonyx look like a multi-coloured stone entwined with lots of many-coloured silk threads. This stone has been used for hundreds of years. In the

18th century, Sardonyx produced in Mongolia became one of the most favoured materials for making snuff-bottles (Bartholomew, 1995b, p. 86).

Apart from the fact that there were readily available natural agate deposits in the northern steppe, and that there was a tradition of working agate for jewellery, agate was in favour during the Yuan Dynasty also because commoners were, by law, not allowed to possess or use jade, only emperors and imperial clans-people being permitted to (Shi Weimin, 1996, p. 87). So agate became a substitute for adorning life. This stone could be worked with similar jade-carving tools and abrasive sands, its structure being a bit harder than jade (agate is 6.5-7.0 in Mohs' Scale) (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 222). In the 9th year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. AD 1272, in the Yuan Dynasty (the second year of the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty), the Department of Agate in Dadu and the Various Other Places was set up, under the Supervision Regency of Jade and Gold (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2226). This department had the duty of ensuring the supply and over-seeing of the making of agate in the Yuan court.

3.1 ARTISTIC SUPPORT FOR THE MONGOL'S CLAIM TO LEGITIMACY IN THE YUAN DYNASTY

By 1280, the Mongols had completed their conquest of China and Central Asia. Khubilai sat on the dragon throne of China, and the greatest continuous land-empire that the world has ever known was born. But, putting this amazing historic feat to one side, the Mongols' horrifying history of slaughter earned them a very bad reputation as a people, regardless of any other qualities they may have had. Despite the Chinese hatred, prejudice and misunderstanding of the Mongols, and the horrific massacres by the Mongols, the latter, with their huge but unusually short-lived empire, did leave a vast repository of connoisseurship, art and scholarship. Without doubt until recently, the Chinese has had always been reluctant to recognise any contributions to art or civilisation made by the Yuan period (Watt, 1980, p. 15). The value of the era and indeed some of its rulers have, however, been reassessed to some extent in modern times, and some surprising results have emerged from this re-

evaluation. The Mongols, for all their barbaric characteristics, did have their own way of expressing their feelings creatively and of depicting Nature artistically. Especially when the Mongol ancestors left the forest and arrived on the seemingly endless grasslands, during the 12th century, they started to associate with other nomadic tribes and peoples. As they learned and exchanged knowledge and culture with them, they became more developed and cultivated (Bao Yuxiang, 1997, p. 228). Starting from a primitive leather-industry making boots and saddles, the Mongols were by the 13th century already very good at making bows and arrows, yurts and felt-rugs. They knew how to melt metals to make spears, knives, swords and armour. They soon developed enough to make fairly decorative objects. Plain leather saddles were replaced by gold ones with beautiful designs of vivid animals and flora on them (No.1). Mongol arrows have been found with jade-tipped heads (Mason, 1872, p. 326), and swords had jade guards decoration. Bowls and wine bottles came to be made in gold or silver, and cots and beds have been found fully covered with jade and other stone or metal ornaments (Yang Boda, 1998, p. 14). However it may have looked in the eyes of the Yuan's great range of ethnically varied cultures, the Mongols were indeed a very artistic people in their own right, and tended strongly to decorate every item they wore or used in everyday life in a manner that was their own.

Above all, the Mongols of the 13th to 14th centuries in China and Central Asia were very skilled at adopting fundamentally different kinds of art when seeking to legitimise themselves in their vast empire (Clunas, 1997, p. 65; Hobson, 1923, p. 44; Bethlenfalvy, 1970, p. 93). They certainly absorbed arts from the Jin (1115-1234) and Liao (907-1125) – also nomadic peoples, into their own artistic repertoire (Forsyth, et al, 1994, p. 325). Even back in the period of the Mongols' military campaigns, although they looted and killed every single person who resisted, they made an exception of the craftsmen and skilled workers of any nationality (Zhou Yongyi, 1987, p. 274). During the Yuan period, although it was an explosive regime under which Chinese and foreign artists were viewed as slaves by law, the Mongols were amazed and charmed by the civilised luxury that surrounded them in the countries they conquered, and much of this was assimilated (Watson, 1974. p. 110).

In the Yuan court after 1271 (the year of establishment of the Yuan Dynasty), religious and secular art on a huge scale were seen. Aesthetic projects, executed in all manner of media, such as ceramics, lacquer-work, paintings, textiles, jades and so on, had begun all over the larger Mongol Empire, from places as far away modern Iran, Afghanistan, Turkestan, and southern and northern China (Soulie de Morant, 1931, p. 222). East, West, North and South, under the Mongol Empire, were able to communicate without any of hindrances of frontier crossing. Artists communicated with each other from every corner of the kingdom, and were able to learn from each other and exchange their ideas, aesthetics and forms. The Yuan ruler was by definition the first to be presented gifts of art (Li Fushun, 1995, p. 2). Consequently, it has been observed that, while the Mongols were not necessarily a very creative nation, they did contribute a great deal to the world by facilitating of the dissemination of knowledge, culture and art (Shijie Shigang, 1985, p. 763). The Mongols were quite aware that they needed as much fresh art as they could acquire, in addition to their own native works, in order to build up sufficient artistic support and to bolster their claims to dynastic legitimacy.

It is also recorded that Khubilai's mother Sorghagani Beki, a remarkable woman, ensured that Khubilai understood that the only way to govern the Chinese was to enlist their support (Paludan, 1998, p. 149). She allowed religious freedom in her domains, conciliating her subjects by patronising Buddhists and Taoists as well as Muslims and Christians

At the same time, the Mongol rulers were not totally oblivious of the need to address certain specific art requirements necessary for an ethnic ruling-group. Certain topics evolved in the north, such as seasonal hunting rituals, which were of great importance to Court culture. The theme of falcons attacking swans was a favourite one for the Mongol nomads, and it became one of the most popular subjects in their court paintings (No.2), jades (Fig. 5-2), and textile-weaving (No. 3) (Clunas, 1997, p. 63).

Concerning the jade industry in particular, following the conquest of China the Yuan Dynasty in addition fell heirs to the jade-working traditions of the Song Dynasty. The use of jade in the Yuan court was extravagant and luxurious (Yang Boda, 1998, p. 14). In the *History of the Yuan*, it reveals that the imperial family wallowed in jade: costumes, weapon accessories, households and carriages were all decorated with jade, not to mention ritual tablets, jade imperial seals, jade military-insignia, jade scholarly objects, jade pendants, as well as all kinds of jade decoration, containers, utensils, vases etcetera. Problems today are where to find them and how to identify them. In addition, the Mongols also made jades with designs from ancient bronzes, for use as symbols of virtue and for rites. The biggest ever jade artefact (3500 kilograms in weight) of the Yuan period, as mentioned above, was the Great Jade Urn, able to hold 660 gallons of wine. It is, after 733 years of vicissitudes, still a glorious piece of art, unmistakable witness to the Mongols' outstanding view of art manifesting enormous energy and power.

Turning to the matter of the scholarly treatment of jade, Zhu Derun, in 1341 produced his *Illustrations of Ancient Jades* in two volumes. In it, there are illustrated 39 jades, each one with a fine woodblock print and text examining its provenance and a description. This book is regarded one of the rare and important academic works on jade in ancient times, not to mention the fact that it was published under the Yuan regime (Sang Zhixing, 1993, p. 2). It evidently suggests that the jade culture and industry in the Yuan period was not dying out, but on the contrary, was developing and very much needed. The Mongol rulers soon accepted the Chinese concept of jade being a symbol of morality, and promoted the jade industry at a flourishing level. In the *History of the Yuan*, there are records with saying such as *geng geng ru yu ren* 耿耿如玉人 (as honest as a jade person) (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4479). As this happened in the Yuan court, it has been suggested that the Mongols had by then begun to appreciate the Chinese concept of morality relating to jade. One of the characteristics attributed to jade in Chinese culture is that of honesty, as jade does not hide its imperfections (Li Dixuan, 1930, p. 2).

3.2 JADE WORKSHOPS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT IN THE YUAN COURT

Early in the Han Dynasty, there was a proper department called *yu fu* 玉府 in the court to be responsible for every business of jade, from its collecting in wild to its carving and storing for the Emperor (Zheng Xuan, Han Dynasty, p. 8; vol. 6).

According to the *History of the Yuan*, in the second year of the reign-period Zhongtong, i.e. AD 1261 (the year after Khubilai declared himself Grand Khan in Karakorum, near present-day Ulan-Bator), the Department of Gold and Jade was established in the Mongol court, out of the previous General Commands of Gold and Jade of the Various Routes,¹ with the task of being responsible for, and controlling, the making of imperial hats, belts, and vessels made of jewels, gold and jade (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2225). This organisation was upgraded in the 3rd year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. AD 1266, as the Route Commands of Gold and Jade.² In the year when the Department of Gold and Jade was established (1261), another department, the Department of Karakorum Craftsmen was also set up, and in the following year (1262), the Department of Jade Craftsman was established in the Yuan court (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2226). The existence of these administrative organisations and departments of jade and gold, shows that the Mongol rulers were very keen and determined to fully control the making of jade and gold objects, which were regarded as symbols of imperial wealth and sovereignty.

In the 9th year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. AD 1272, in the Yuan Dynasty, the Department of Agate in Dadu was set up, under the Supervision Regency of Jade and Gold (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2226). It controlled more than 500 craftsman-households in Dadu. In the 15th year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. AD 1278, in Yuan Dynasty, it was upgraded as the Department of Supervision, and put in charge of all the workshops of jade and other craftsmanship in Dadu and Hangzhou (in present-day Jiangsu Province)

¹ The Route was a stable governmental region governed by one of 185 Route Commands (Hucker, 1985, p. 64).

² The Department of Gold and Jade was originally set up in Karakorum (near present-day Ulan-Bator) in 1261. It was upgraded and expanded a few time during the Yuan period. But it was not moved, as described by Brian McElney, to Hangzhou (McElney, 1994, p. 326).

In the 12th year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. AD 1275, in the Yuan Dynasty, the Route Commands of Craftsmen of the Various Colours (i.e. non-Chinese, non-Mongol nationalities) was set up to control different crafts. This appears to have been the administrative organ for crafts throughout the whole empire. The Bureau of Agate and Jade was one of its 11 bureaux (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 2144-2145).

These records in the *History of the Yuan* prove clearly that the Yuan rulers had started to control the state-run jade workshops long before they moved to the area of present-day Beijing to set up their capital at Dadu. Yang Boda argues that the Yuan state-run jade workshops were established in 1278, 1279 and 1280 (Yang Boda, 1991, p. 131). They were indeed the Yuan jade workshops in the Court, or run by the Court. But according to the records of the *History of the Yuan*, the governmental jade workshops and organs of jade management were established quite early on, and were up-and-running long before the Mongols had full control of their empire. The state-run jade workshops, which Yang Boda reports, were nothing more than consolidation of a previously established, upgraded and improved jade administrations.

In the 16th year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. AD 1279, the Agency for Collecting Sand of the Datong Route was set up, to superintend 106 families of sand collectors, who were to collect Summer-water Jade-grinding Sand (*Mo yu xia shu sha* 磨玉夏水砂).³ Their assigned quota of sand was 200 *piculs* annually, and it was transported to Dadu for the jade craftsmen in the court to make jades with (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2228).

3.3. IMPORTANT OCCURRENCES IN JADE MANUFACTORY DURING THE YUAN DYNASTY

Jade-carving during the Yuan Dynasty seems to have been divided into two categories (Song Yingxing, 1637, p. 465). The first one was the Imperial Jade

³ "Summer-water Jade-grinding Sand" could be interpreted "Jade-grinding Sand collected in a river in the summer" or "Jade-grinding Sand collected in the Xia River". It is not clearly recorded in the *History of the Yuan* about this entry.

Manufactory (*yu zuo* 玉作), in Dadu, which recruited the finest jade-carvers to the Yuan court and supervised jade manufacture. The second was the traditional jade-carving centres already active during the Song Dynasty, such as Suzhou and Hangzhou, in south-eastern China, where the most skilful traditional craftsmanship was to be found. The following events known to have happened concerning the world of jade in Dadu during the Yuan Dynasty will show some important points about the Mongol rulers' awareness of, and how they encouraged, jade-working.

3.3.1 The “Father of the Jade Carving”

Among many jade carvers throughout the Chinese history, it appears, however, that there has been one jade-worker who have won the title of “Father of Jade Carving” during the entire history of jade-carving to have stood out sufficiently (Li Qiao, 1990, p. 133). He was a Chinese man of the Yuan Dynasty, named Qiu Chuji (1205-1285) coming from Shandong Province.

Qiu, who had the Taoist cognomen Changchun, sometimes served in the Yuan court as an eminent Taoist teacher. The Yuan Emperor Shizu, Khubilai Khan, received his Taoist teachings well, and recognised his philosophical importance (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 4524-4526). Khubilai issued an imperial document bearing the imperial seal-mark and addressing Qiu as “the immortal”. Under a regime where Tibetan Buddhism was predominant (detailed discussion of Tibetan Buddhism follows in Chapter Four), this was a remarkably high honour to accord to a Daoist priest. Interestingly, Qiu Chuji, though being highly respected religious person in the Yuan court, was only a part-time monk, his main vocation seemed to have been in another direction, although he was physically located in the Bai Yun Guan, a Taoist abbey in Yanjing, in the west of Beijing. His greatest achievement was, to have become the Father of Jade-carving (Li Qiao, 1990, p. 133).

His life-long interests and career were those of a jade artisan (Xue Li, 1994, p. 390). The Daoist abbey became his jade workshop, where he both carved jades himself and passed on his skills to young jade craftsmen. His passion for working in stones seems

to have presented no problems to, nor been in any conflict with, his religious calling in the Yuan court. On the contrary, his talent for turning a raw stone into a beautiful artwork was made fully known to, and was highly appreciated by, the Yuan emperor. One day when Qiu completed the carving of a piece of Mutton-fat Jade into a splendid flower-vase, as a compliment and gift to the Emperor (Xue Li, 1994, p. 390), he was granted a paper-weight made of white jade by the emperor, in token of the latter's admiration of his jade-carving skills.

After that, Qiu Chuji's first-class jade craftsmanship became very well known in the jade profession, mainly because he was an unrivalled carver of fine jades. No doubt, his fame was also largely enhanced, because he had received great praise from the Yuan emperor, in addition to his religious profundity and for his artistic accomplishments. Qiu Chuji has been regarded as the cause of a linkage between Daoism and jade, owing to his dual profession as Daoist and jade-carver (Xue Li, 1994, p. 391). Even nowadays, many jade craftsmen are Daoists, and they go each year to Baiyun Guan, the Daoist abbey in the west of Beijing, on 15th January,⁴ Qiu Chuji's birthday by the Chinese lunar calendar, to pay respects to their Father of Jade-carving (Xue Li, 1994, p. 391). Daoist monks, who can sing the "Formula of the Water Stool", a song written by Qiu Chuji about sitting on a stool with a pedalled wheel to carve and polish jades, are always well treated by jade artisans, and given liberal alms.

This historical account concerning a Chinese jade-carver during the Yuan Dynasty, in fact provides undeniably strong evidence that the Yuan rulers did welcome and encourage craftsmen, regardless of their religion or nationality. As a consequence, the Father of Jade-carving emerged in the Yuan period, and has ever since been the patron saint of the entire Chinese jade profession.

⁴ Another record says that Qiu Chuji's birthday was 24th November (Chinese lunar calendar) (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 16). The same source also confirms that on 24th November (Chinese lunar calendar) all jade artisans in Beijing took one day off and went to Bai Yun Guan (Daoist temple) to kneel and pay respect to the Father of Jade-carving. Moreover, each jade workshop had a portrait of Qiu Chuji to worship (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 16).

3.3.2 The Introduction of Harder Abrasives

As mentioned above, jade is harder than metal, and is carved with an abrasive that is harder than, or of similar hardness to, jade. Quartz is believed to have been employed to make the abrasive in Neolithic times (BC10, 000-4000) (Palmer, 1967, p. 16). It had the advantages of being readily available in large quantities and of being of a quality ready for use. Such quartz-sand is either pure silica or silicon dioxide (with hardness corresponding to 7.0 on Mohs' Scale), and is called Yellow Sand (*huang sha* 黄砂). Then crushed almandine garnets probably came into use during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). They have a hardness of 7.5 on Mohs' Scale, and chemically they are silicates of calcium and iron. The next evolution in abrasives is thought to have been corundum, made up of oxides of aluminium and iron, which is only less hard than diamond, being 9.0 on Mohs' Scale (Dong Xinzhen, 1995, p. 398). It is believed that corundum or emery was the last development, before modern times, of abrasives for jade, and was first used in jade making probably during the Yuan Dynasty (Palmer, 1967, p. 16). Hansford notes that a new abrasive was introduced to the Peking workshops about the 12th century, and was in use on a large scale in the 13th century, and that may well have been corundum, known as Black Sand (*hei sha* 黑砂) (Hansford, 1950, p. 74).

As mentioned above, the Agency for the Collecting of Sand of the Datong Route was set up in 1279 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2228). It was to supervise 106 families who were working to collect abrasive sand for the Yuan court. They had to fulfil an annual quota of 200 *piculs*, required by the court. It thus appears that a new source of jade-carving abrasive was then opened up. The annual amount to be supplied, 200 *piculs*, seems a surprisingly small output of "sand" for the 106 families, so Hansford argues that the sand-making could have been a heavy labour task, involving the breaking up and crushing of rock (Hansford, 1950, p. 74).

The location of the Agency for the Collecting of Sand of the Datong Route does not seem to be questioned, because Datong is a famous coal-city in Shanxi Province. However, it does not sit on a geological structure of hard stones, or anything, which

could be categorised as jade (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 94). In other words, Datong, throughout history, did not produce jade, nor anything as hard as jade abrasive. On the contrary, its main mineral product has been coal (lignite, 2.4-4.0 Mohs' Scale) (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 94). Historically, Datong, was called Yunzhou in the Wudai Dynasty (907-960) (Tan Qixiang ed, 1991, p. 49). In the Liao Dynasty, it became Xijing. When the Yuan ruler came, the name was changed again, to Datong, administrative capital of Datong *lu* (Datong Route), this name was not brought into use until the 25th year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. AD 1288 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1375). This record is certainly in conflict with the date of the establishment of the Agency for the Collecting of Sand of the Datong Route, AD 1279, if the sand administration was in Datong, Shanxi Province. Meanwhile, there was a small village called Datong Village, about 80 kilometres away, west of the lower reaches of the River Yarkand and in eastern Taxkorgan Tajik Autonomous County in Chinese Turkestan. To the north of Datong Village, there has been a jade mine throughout history, called Datong Jade Mine (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 178). According to the archives of the Xinjiang (Chinese Turkestan) Geology Department, a jade administration and manufactory was set up by the Yuan court in that area (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 167).

The geological structure of the Datong Jade Mine, which is part of the Tekiliktag Massif on the north side of the Kunlun Mountains, was formed in the Proterozoic era (1,000 million years ago) (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 178). Its gemological component is composed of schist and marble lenticular rocks with an intrusion of granoliorite. On top of the granoliorite encroachment, there is an irregular layer of dolomite marble rocks, and Khotan jade is found buried in this. The formula of jade is very complicated in geological terms, but the intrusion of granoliorite in basalt and volcanic lappilusis is reckoned to be one of the key elements for the creation of jade to take place. Coincidentally, ruby and sapphire require similar geological conditions for developing, and, what is more, they are both species of corundum (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 34), which was used as the jade abrasive in the Yuan court (Palmer, 1967, p. 16). Datong in Taxkorgan Tajik happens to sit on an earthquake area (Xu Desong ed., 1990, p. 12), which does bear volcanic lappilusis and has the geological

circumstances and possibilities for producing hard stones like corundum. This, again, from the geological and gemological aspects, strongly suggests that the Agency for the Collecting of Sand of the Datong Route set up by the Yuan court was most likely in Chinese Turkestan's Datong, Taxkorgan Tajik Autonomous County, where jade was produced, rather than Shanxi Province's Datong, which was mainly a coal-bearing area. This geological hypothesis has been historically and scientifically proved to be true. That there was indeed a jade administrative organisation of the Yuan Dynasty which had been set up in Xinjiang Datong (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 178), to both supervise its jade production and, abrasive gathering from about 300 kilometres away in the Taxkorgan Tajik Autonomous County, in the River Karakax, which had been producing corundum and diamond (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 312).

Corundum is normally polycrystal or cone-shape with lots of sharp edges, and it is generally found in very small sizes, from 2mm-5mm in diameter. Due to its hardness and particular size and shape, corundum has long been used as an abrasive for industrial purposes. Although its species, such as ruby and sapphire, with jewellery value were not found in China until the late 1970s of this century (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 38), its reserves, on beaches and eroded rocks, small in size and sandy in form, have always been there, and have been known to exist in the Chinese provinces of Fujian, Anhui, Jiangsu, Shandong and Hainan. It has also been reported in the last few decades that sources of corundum were present in north-west China, in regions such as Tibet and Xinjiang, Chinese Turkestan (Luan Binao, 1989, pp. 38-39).

It has been reported in research on the matter, that early in the Ming Dynasty, the tribute items to the Ming emperors from Chinese Turkestan included ruby and diamonds (Huo Youguang, 1998, p. 2). The importance of these precious stones in China at that time was their extreme quality of hardness, which enabled them to be used as abrasives, instead of jewellery, to grind and polish jade wares.

3.3.3 Jade-gathering

All down the River Karakash, pieces of jade are found amongst the pebbles of the stream. These are estimated at 3 times the value of the quarry stones. They are called Water Jade (Shaw, 1871, p. 473).

What may have first occurred long before the Mongol period, was that somebody picked up a jade rock on the bank of a river, and later, people began hunting for jades within the river itself. Some pieces of jade were dug out from the sand deposited on the riverbeds. As a consequence, people would trace back along the riverbeds, and discover jades buried in the primary rocks, perhaps in the mountains. There are a series of terms in Chinese for describing the methods of gathering jade: to pick up jades (*shi yu* 拾玉) from the ground, to fish up jades (*lao yu* 捞玉) in rivers and streams and to dig out jades (*wa yu* 挖玉) as in mining (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 261).

The most common ways of acquiring jade in the past were to pick it up from flood-land or to fish it up from shallow riverbeds (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 261). In the summer, ice on the Kunlun Mountains melted and flushed rocks and stones down stream. Jade rocks from the primary mine were carried away by the flood, down in the river as far as the foot of the mountains, where the current velocity was suddenly slowed because of the flatter land there. Jade rocks then stopped flowing at that point, and accumulated in the riverbeds. When the autumn arrived and the river became dry, the jade rocks, now perhaps in the form of boulders or pebbles, emerged. The autumn, therefore, was the time to pick up jade cobbles. In the winter, jade rocks were hidden underneath the ice, either in the river or on the mountains. They re-appeared in the riverbeds only when the spring came, and just before the ice melted occasioning the floods. This was only a short period of time, but it was another season, besides the autumn, for picking up jade. Mostly, jade pebbles were picked up when the river was not dried out (Nos. 4 & 5). Local residents were, and still are, employed both on a casual basis and officially to “fish” for the precious jade (Nott, 1962, p. 3).

As described by Song Yingxing, jade could be seen more easily in the river when the moon was out, because the jade reflected the moonlight (Song Yingxing, 1637, p. 465). This is probably a fanciful legend, since jade has as low a reflectivity as 1.62 which could hardly reflect anything at night (Dong Zhenxin. 1995, p. 14), not to mention in a river bed, even when the moon shone brightly. Nonetheless, it is recorded that jade gatherers jumped into the river during the autumn when the moon was shining bright and clear (Song Yingxing, 1637, p. 465). The light probably enabled jade gatherers to work at night. It is not difficult to imagine how cold it must have been in the autumn water in north-west China, where the temperature barely reaches 4°C in that season (Xu Dehong ed., 1990, p. 21). What is more, the job of gathering jade was commonly done by women. They submerged themselves naked in the cold water to grope around on the river beds. It was traditionally believed that the woman's *yin* or "female-force" qualities, would somehow attract the jade (Song Yingxing, 1637, p. 465; Goette, 1976, p. 228).

In the spring, the river would thaw and jade boulders, which had been flooded down from the mountains, and could sometimes, be seen and picked up. When the gathering-season came, the areas of Khotan and Yarkand, and the rivers Karakash and Yurungkash would be officially closed. It is recorded in *Seeings and Records in the West*, that jade-gatherers walked side by side in the shallow water, while the government officials sat on the shore. If anybody thought they had stepped on a piece of jade, they would bend over to pick it up, and the officials on the banks would take a note of the name and number of times each person bent down. When the gatherers came back, they would hand in the pieces of jade, and the number of pieces had to match what had been noted down (*Xiyu wenjian lu*, Ming Dynasty, p. 45; Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 263).

The seasonal jade-gathering was organised and controlled by every dynastic government (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 263). The Yuan emperor was no exception. As soon as they established the Yuan Dynasty in 1271, the Mongol rulers set up the Court Jade Manufactory and the agency for gathering jade grinding in

Khotan and Yarkand. Jades from Khotan and Yarkand were tributary goods for sending to the Mongol court (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2380). It was also recorded that in the 11th year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. AD 1274, due to the hard life, constant wars and many deaths caused by frequent natural disasters, there were only 70 out of the previous 300 households left in Khotan for gathering the raw material of jade. Some officials suggested an additional 60 households living near Khotan should join in the gathering of jade, and the transporting of the jade via the government's "water station", by water (river), to Dadu. This, it was hoped, would help secure the Yuan court's requirements of jade-production (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2380). It is further recorded that more than 40 or so horses were needed to transport Abrasive Sand (*gong yu sha* 攻玉砂), and that more than 1000 people were working in the gathering of jade. It was a considerable burden on the people of the localities concerned (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 493-495).

Jades taken from quarries or mines is known as Mountain Material (*shan liao* 山料). It was an extremely slow and unprofitable work to gather jade this way, as the jade was normally buried deep underneath the ground. It required lots of hard work both to guess where jade was and to dig it out with the minimum of expenditure. The earliest official record known today of the gathering-process is that concerning the Qing Dynasty Qianlong Emperor, who sent some officials to supervise jade-digging in the Khotan area (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 266). Because of the small yields and lack of top quality in the jade from the mines there, jade-digging has long since ceased, and today there remains only some large waste-holes in the ground.

Another record that deserves attention, is that made during the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, when the jade industry reached its height of splendour. The Yuan court set up the government-run jade and jade-abrasive gathering and production administration in the Datong jade mine in Taxkorgan County (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 274). The gathering of jade in the River Yarkand was also controlled and supervised by Yuan officials. It has been estimated that about 388 tons of jade, at the average yield of 4000 kilograms per year, was dug out of jade mines and collected from rivers during the Yuan Dynasty (Tang Yanling et al, 1994, p. 274).

Apart from the official compulsory jade consignments to the Yuan court, historical jade tributes to the emperors, especially when imperial expansion was at its greatest, never went out of fashion (Palmer, 1967, p. 11).

3.3.4 The Transporting of Jade to Dadu

Marco Polo, in his *Travels*, describes how raw jade was sent to Dadu in the 14th century, and how it made good profits (Polo, 13th century, p. 83). For thousands of years, jade was transported from Khotan and Yarkand to inland China from Chinese Turkestan, via Gansu Province, Ningxia and Shanxi, and into Hebei Province to Dadu (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 305). The Silk Road started from Chang'an (present-day Xian), proceeded via the Gansu Corridor as far as Dunhuang, and then branched into two routes, one of which went to Turfan, Xinjiang, and along the Tianshan Mountains and then down to Kashgar, on the Pamirs Plateau; the other went from Dunhuang directly to Khotan, and then up to Kashgar. The Silk Road then advanced westwards through Central Asia.

Archaeological excavations show that Khotan jade was used in the Yangshao Culture found in the middle reaches of the Yellow River (10,000-4,000 BC) and during Neolithic times in Shaanxi and Gansu Provinces, where have no natural deposits of jade (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 303). Neither of which have any natural deposits of jade. Anyang archaeological sites have also revealed jades of the Shang Dynasty (16th-11th centuries BC), from Chinese Turkestan. But the Silk Road was not developed any earlier than the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) (Watt, et al, 1997, p. 7). These facts strongly suggest that there was a "jade road" long before the silk-trade routes to and from Chinese Turkestan. Another significant point is that there was a place on the Silk Road in Gansu Province called Jade Gate (*yu men* 玉门, even before the silk route came into being. Jade Gate used to be heavily guarded for its key strategic location as regards the transport of jade (Goette, 1937, p. 36). It was the only way out of Khotan in ancient time for transporting Khotan jades to the Chinese heartland (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 306). It later also became the only access for

transporting silk to and from China on the Silk Road. But, all importantly for our present considerations, the name Jade Gate was retained. It was never changed to “Silk Gate”. This leads one to believe that the Silk Road was indeed first opened up as a jade route and that throughout history this jade trade flourished alongside the silk trade.

During the Yuan Dynasty, the jade road was also fully functioning. Song Yingxing recorded that uncut jade from Khotan and Yarkand was transported by water, on camels’ backs, or on crude carts pulled by camels or mules, to the Jade Gate near Jiayuguan in Gansu Province, where jade-trade took place between the caravans and merchants from Dadu or more southerly China (Song Yingxing, et al, 1637, p. 465). Once deals were agreed, the jade was handed over or sold to the merchants, who went on to transport it into China proper (Song Yingxin, et al, 1637, p. 465). By that point, the jade had completed a 2000 mile long journey, over the Central Asian desert to its destination, the workshops, where it was cut, ground and polished to various designs.

Jade deposited and gathered by the Yuan court from other places, such as Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu and Henan Provinces, was transported either by land or by the River Yangtse or the Yellow River, or their tributaries, and other rivers to Dadu for carving there (Gu Fang, 1996, p. 195). Jade boulders or pieces were normally wrapped up in ox-skin as a parcel called a Jade Ball (*yu tuan* 玉团) (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 308). The volume and weight of each parcel were decided by what was convenient for transport by camel or human or any other means of transport. This way of packaging jade was intended to protect it, for some of it had a very thin and delicate “skin”. It was also easier to carry a number of small parcels than a huge sack, which would, moreover, have been too eye-catching to thieves or plunderers. And, anyway, people such as the Chinese Turks, Tibetans and Mongols all had a tradition of carrying things in smallish bags made of animal skins, such as oxhide or goatskin.

It was a widespread tradition for jade sometimes to be put into a live goat’s leg or a live dog’s stomach. Partly it was to hide the jade in order to transport it without

anyone else realising its existence, and partly it was in order to dye the jade with a different colour (Zhang Guanwen, 1992, p. 188). The jade, it is said, was penetrated by the hot blood within the living animals, forming threads of red in its coloration, a technique which was used to forge ancient jades, of which decolouration had sometimes accrued to the jade surface after a long burial and it was highly valued. The penetration would take a few years to take place, and the transporting of jade from remote areas like Khotan and Yarkand to Dadu or southerly China also took years to complete (Tang Yanling, et al, 1994, p. 307). It was indeed a case of killing two birds with one stone. The jade being transported in the living animals' bodies was commonly in the form of already-carved jade ornamental objects or utensils.

3.4 ANIMALS REPRESENTED IN JADE DURING THE YUAN PERIOD

With the background of the Mongols' animal-oriented life-style and the strong influence from Chinese jade culture, both discussed above, the Mongols, hunters, nomads and warriors, seemed during the Yuan period to have been very ready to adopt Chinese culture, with some additions from nomadic styles and attitudes, in their quest for support to legitimise their rule over the vast conquered lands of China and Central Asia (Yang Boda, 1993, p. 16). Land and sea routes became more convenient for traffic, and foreign trade flourished. The Mongol empire was in fact more connected to the rest of the world than previous political entities of the East had been. Not surprisingly, under the fast-changing geopolitical and social circumstances of their dynasty, change and development were also taking place in jade crafts.

Jade-carving seems to have been much appreciated, and indeed enhanced, under the Mongols during the Yuan Dynasty, especially in the Yuan court, and probably in the run-up to the formal founding of the Dynasty, too (Yang Boda, 1993, p. 16). The establishment of government-run jade departments and workshops, already discussed are the best evidence of this. Furthermore, with the strong Chinese influence from the Song Dynasty, and the urge of the Mongols to seek legitimisation by the acquisition of aspects of traditional Chinese culture, as support for their claim to be the true rulers of China, Chinese jade culture, was developed, not brought to a halt by the

changing-hands of dynastic power (Zhang Guangwei, 1999, p. 149). On the contrary, it in many ways flourished even more, with the addition of new cultural traditions brought in by the Mongols.

The imperial use of jade for dragon-seals, symbols of rank and power, the newly instituted “jade belt” and hat-decorations for Mongol officials, and the jewellery and vessels made from jade and semi-precious stones, meant that jade was everywhere in the lives of the Mongol emperors and nobles. Chinese scholarly jade-objects, such as the arm-rest or the paper-weight, which were not articles truly relevant to the Mongol style of life, were also much appreciated, and commissioned in great quantity, by the Mongols. Artistically speaking, all these newly learnt of and manufactured jade-objects came to be so well syncretised with Mongol tastes and styles, that animal or zoomorphic motifs rendered in both Chinese and Mongol fashions were extensively employed to decorate jade objects with a unique Mongol nomadic and romantic flavour (Yang Boda, 1991, p. 130).

Jades ranging from the imperial dragon seals and a wine-urn weighing tons to small buckles with lions on them, plaques adorned with phoenixes, pendants bearing fish or bird designs, and jade pictures of other fauna, have formed a surviving collection of jade animals from the Yuan Dynasty. There are basically two types of animals depicted on the Mongol-period jades: realistic animals and fabulous creatures. They were not necessarily all carved by, or for, the Mongols, but many of them bear some obvious trace of nomadic influence, as will be clearly seen in the jades discussed in later chapters of this thesis.

3.4.1 Animals As Regarded by the Mongols

The Mongols, being a nomadic people, relied on the “five snouts”, the horse, camel, bovine (yak and cattle), sheep and goat (Bartholomew, 1995a, p. 99), as well as wild animals for hunting. The Mongols were very conscious of the importance of these animals to their lives, and in fact, every aspect of Mongolian life was permeated by them (Bosson, 1995, p. 14).

During the 13th to 14th centuries, the most important activities of the Mongols, apart from military campaigns, were herding and hunting, and sometimes fishing, where this was feasible. The knowledge of how to handle the animals that they herded and hunted was passed down from generation to generation, and concerned such things as how and where to keep these animals for how long and under what conditions. The Mongolian horses (*Equus przewalski*), although not necessarily the most handsome of the horse species, were the most enduring, which made the Mongol cavalry the best, able to conquer much of the world. The horse and camel together constituted the most important means of transport for the Mongols. Yaks, cattle, sheep and goats were all raised specifically to provide milk, wool, meat, skin and sacrificial offerings for their herders.

In their homelands on the steppes, the Mongols covered themselves from head to toe with animal furs and skins. Tents, the almost exclusive form of Mongol dwelling, were covered with felt made from sheep's wool or from the less desirable camelhair (Shi Weimin, 1996, p. 165).

The major foods for the Mongols since ancient times have been derived from animals. This includes the meat of deer, sheep and swans, and the milk of the horse, camel, goat and deer, as well as delicacies such as the hooves of wild camels, and the lips of the moose (Cai Zhichun, 1993, pp. 426-427). Dairy products such as mare's milk and *kumiss* (a fermented brew of mare's milk) were among their favourite drinks, which they were happy to imbibe as their sole beverage (Pauludan, 1998, p. 152).

In art, animal forms as inspirational sources of symbolism were almost universally accepted concepts in the early world (He Xingliang, 1992, p. 215). The Mongols were no exception to this generalisation, and indeed were even more inclined to employ such inspiration. Mongol literature and folklore reflect the Mongol people's abiding interest in the age, colour, disposition and sexual characteristics of every kind of animal in their care (Bartholomew, 1995a, p. 100). The Mongols' names, for individual animals in antiquity, began with those of the greyish white wolf and a

white deer⁵, who were said to have borne the nation of the Mongols (*The Secret History of the Mongols*, p. 1). The names of fearsome or handsome animals, such as “tiger”, “deer”, “eagle”, “dog”, “ox”, “wild duck” and the like were throughout Mongolian history among the favourite ones chosen for personal names (Cai Zhichun, 1993, pp. 426-427).

Animal fetishism is found reflected in every aspect of Mongol life. Animal figures were the most common motifs employed to depict life and nature; and zoomorphic characters were also among the most familiar forms chosen and created to demonstrate the Mongol wish to obtain more power or beauty. An admiration for animals was deeply embedded in every Mongol. Mongol jewellery, embroidery, leatherwork, and woodcarvings often engaged with animal motifs. Initially, the Mongols decorated themselves with certain animal features, such as birds’ feathers to indicate their wish to be able to fly (Hansen, 1950, p. 123). They also made themselves costumes and head-dresses in the forms of deer, bears and goats. One of the best and most eye-catching examples of their understanding of animals is a Mongol woman’s head-dress. It is a skullcap-like head-dress, with hair-clips, and braid-casings consisting of fine filigree worked into intricate knots, inter-twined into a horn motif, and then embellished with turquoise and coral (No. 6). If hair is neither sufficiently long nor thick the false hair is concealed in sheathes made of silk or some other material (Boyer, 1995, p. 131). Anthropologists believe that the horned coiffure has existed in Mongolia for about two thousand years (Boyer, 1995, p. 128).

Living in northern China and Mongolia, there is an animal commonly called the Wild Sheep (No. 7). By coincidence, the animal has a pair of very striking horns which share some characteristics with those of the Mongol woman’s head-dress. The Wild Sheep, called Argali Sheep (*Ovis ammon*), exists as seven sub-species in China., among which *Ovis ammon darwini* Przewalski is found in Inner Mongolia (Zheng Shengwu, 1994, pp. 184-185). Both sexes of the Wild Sheep have horns, with the female ones being so much smaller than those of the male, and do not form

⁵ In the English translation of *The Secret History of the Mongols*, it is a “bluish wolf”, and a “fallow deer” by Cleaves (Cleaves, 1982, p. 1). In various Chinese translations, the wolf is called a *Cang Lang* 苍狼 (greyish or white-ish wolf) and a *Bai Lu* 白鹿 (white deer) (Cai Zhichun, et al, 1993, p. 426).

the beautiful spiral curls like of the male horns (Zheng Shengwu, 1994, p. 183). The Argali Sheep is called *arcal* in Mongolian spoken language, and was first referred to by a Western missionary, John of Plano Carpini, during his journey in the 13th century to China and Mongolia (Dawson, 1955, p.100).⁶ He recorded that the animal was valued by the Mongols in part because they used its great horns to make cups with.

Because of the local existence of the Argali Sheep with its extraordinary horns, the intricate coiffure of the Mongol woman does not seem to have come about by coincidence, although the coiffure is exceptionally elaborate among known examples in the world. The idea to depict or try to transfer the beauty of the animal into the human realm, by making exotic head-dresses, tattooing images or employing other means, was believed to have expressed an admiration for the charm of these beasts (He Xingliang, 1992, p. 292). More of such animal worship, such as that involving the use of dog-capped costumes, fish-head decoration and tiger-shaped hair-styles, can be found throughout China, from the most ancient times. Many continue to the present day (He Xingliang, 1992, pl. 9, 12 &17). The significance of relating an animal's beauty to that of the human, for the Mongols, as for any other ancient people of other nations, is linked to the belief in transformation, by means of imitation of animal forms to obtain the power and beauty of those animals for themselves (Carter, 1957, p. 12). It may be reasonable to suggest that the large and spectacular horns of the Argali Sheep were once greatly admired for them to have been imitated to make a horn-shaped hair-style for the Mongol women when the style was first created. Research evidence shows that it became a fashion among the

⁶ *The Mongol Mission*. This book contains the narratives and letters of the Franciscan missionaries in Mongolia and China in the 13th century. Translated by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey, the narratives are those by John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck of their journeys to Mongolia (Dawson, ed. 1955, Preface). John of Plano Carpini (Giovanni dal Plano del Carpini; known in Latin as Plano Carpini), was a Franciscan monk of Italian origin sent by Pope Innocentius IV on a journey that took two years. Another Franciscan monk, known as William of Rubruck, probably a native of Flanders, was sent by the French king Louis IX (known as Saint Louis) on a mission that lasted from 1253 to 1255. The manuscript of William's report, addressed to his king, was first published in London by Richard Hakluyt three centuries later, in 1598. But these two missions give a first-hand authentic account of the first contact between Western Christendom and the Far East. The exact dates of these missions seem to have recorded with a couple of years difference by Christopher Dawson (Dawson, 1955, Preface), Bosson (Bosson, 1995, p. 11) and Wood (Wood, 1995, p. 16-21). Other historians' research will no doubt provide more evidence on the timing. However, this is not this thesis's major concern.

Mongol women around the 13th to the 14th centuries AD (Boyer, 1995, p. 136).

There has, moreover, been hardly any change in this fashion, since the tent-dwellers of Mongolia live today in a manner reckoned similar to that of the tribes who made or owned surviving ornaments and styles from about two thousand years ago (Carter, 1957, p. 85).

The remarkable hairstyles of the Mongol women of this kind developed in several directions. Apart from modelling their appearance on the Argali, they may have modelled the form on the ibex (*Capra ibex*) (No. 8) and possibly on the Blue Sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*) (No. 9), as well as on members of the Family of Bovidae, all of which have magnificent horns and have lived in Mongolia since very ancient days (Zheng Shengwu, 1994, pp. 176-182) (Nos. 10, 11 & 12).

There is a bronze sculpture of an animal head dated to the 10th to 12th centuries, displayed in the Inner Mongolian Museum, Hohhot⁷ (No. 13). This bronze animal head is depicted in an extremely naturalistic manner. When compared with the real Argali Sheep, the bronze shares a lot of common features. The bronze horns are spiral curved, sweep powerfully down along the sides of the cheeks, then curl upwards again to form beautiful whirlpool-shaped horns. Its eye-sockets are big and round. These features are well recognised in the Argali Sheep in real life, and strongly suggest that the bronze animal could well be modelled by the Argali Sheep.

While women have had their hair manipulated in imitation of handsome animals, men have tended to deify the characteristics, which they admire and desire most for themselves. A Mongol costume for men, for example, exhibited in 1998 in the Inner Mongolian Museum, has a most striking decoration around its shoulders (No. 14). It has a series of colourful fabric stripes, to which is added a set of striped adornments, which can also be viewed separately. The costume is one kind of uniform worn during Mongolian festivals and wrestling matches.⁸ The stripes on its shoulder (or

⁷ There is a brief record of this bronze head of a Wild Sheep in the Inner Mongolian Museum, Hohhot, October 1998. Therefore, it is not possible to say exactly when this bronze was discovered, other than: "Excavated in 1989. 10th - 12th centuries. Hohhot, Inner Mongolia", note of this sculpture.

⁸ Wrestling is one of the three manly sports (horse-racing, wrestling and archery) which they have passionately practiced and followed ever since the birth of their nation (Lattimore, 1962.p. 16).

around its collar) indicate the number of the wearer's victories. Each stripe is one triumph achieved in a wrestling match, and clearly it is considered that the more the better. If the wrestler loses, a stripe would be taken away. The man would be regarded as a weakling, increasingly humiliated as the colourful stripes grow fewer because of his failures.⁹

Having some adornment fluttering around one's shoulders or head seems to have appealed to the Mongols (Boyer, 1995, p. 140). As far back as the 4th century AD, Chinese commentators have spoken scornfully of barbarians in the northern steppes, and their long, flowing, loose-hanging hair. Quite regardless of Chinese ignorance about the Mongols, the nomads' sense of beauty has been maintained and handed down from generation to generation. It shows no sign of dying out. On the vast grasslands there are things flowing in the air: luxuriant grass waving in the breeze over the mighty prairie; the flags and ribbons on top of the Mongol tents fluttering in the wind; rain pouring in long trailing tails; and snowflakes floating and drifting like white curtains; and, above all, the flowing stallions' mane as he gallops gracefully across the steppe, and the dashing deer with their antlers waving proudly. The Mongols decorated themselves with long flying elements, like a graceful horse's mane, to express their adoration of the animals' beauty and charm. Their women's head-dresses also show something of this trailing feature (Nos. 6, 10, 11 & 12). It is recorded that Mongolian women of various tribes shared this common taste, using lots of heavy strings of beads hanging over their forehead and cheeks like fringes (Boyer, 1995, pp. 147-148).

Inevitably, the Mongols also adopted these features to beautify their works of art. A dragon sculptured on a marble fence has been found in the ruins of the Yuan Dynasty capital Dadu, present-day Beijing (No. 15). Although it is only a fragment of the original marble, the dragon in relief can be seen clearly. It has characteristic long, waving "mane". This way of depicting the dragon, also seen in depiction of other

⁹ The meaning of the colourful decoration of stripes for the wrestling costume was explained to me by Mr. Wang Xin, curator of the Inner Mongolian Museum, when I was visiting there in October 1998. Sometimes the wrestling costume is just a tiny vestige of a jacket, covered with metal studs, against which a man will grind his opponent's face if he gets the chance (Lattimore, 1962, p. 20).

animals, but especially mythical ones, of the time, was carried on throughout the Yuan Dynasty. A stone bridge standing over a little canal in the Beijing Palace Museum presents another striking example of this type of long hanging hair on animals. This bridge was built as a part of the Dadu when it was founded and constructed by order of Khubilai in 1264 (Jiang Shunyuan, 1990, pp. 31-37; Jiang Shunyuan, 1992, pp. 96-110). Stone lions are carved along each side of the bridge's railing, and there are four identical mythical animals on guard at the end of the two railings. No. 16 is one of these four fabulous creatures, a sitting animal with fearsome protruding eyes staring out from underneath the eye-brows, a mouth full of sharp and shooting-out teeth, a strong chest, and powerful legs decorated with flames and scales. Most striking feature of all, is its long and flowing hair, clustered in very dense locks, each lock starting with a whirlpool and then fluttering slightly upwards to join up with the clouds trailing behind the animal.

The similar long flying hair motif of Mongol art is frequently found on many occasions, especially the dragon carved in jade, which is a good illustration of this distinctive design-feature. More examples and discussions of it will be provided later below and further investigations into jade dragons, so as to present and analyse its significance more fully.

3.4.2 Jade Animals Modelled in the Wild



Fig. 3-1

In a herding and hunting culture, the Mongols, who lived close to Nature, fashioned gems after what they observed in daily life, doing so in an extremely naturalistic manner. There is a jade sheep, for example, in the Hardinge Collection (Fig. 3-1), which was depicted so as to show some of the characteristics of the Wild Sheep (No. 7). Its recumbent body is brown and the colour grows lighter down to its abdomen, as happens with the live animal (Zheng Shengwu, 1994, p. 183). Its large head, short, thick neck and stubby tail on a rounded rump, are also characteristic of the Wild Sheep. Its magnificent horns, however, for

some reason or other bear features shared of both the Wild Sheep and Ibex (*Capra ibes*) (No. 8). This latter animal has a coat that is spotted all over. This is very uncommon in the Wild Sheep, but not completely unknown (Xia Wuping, 1988, p.115). It sometimes occurs that the Wild Sheep does have some light-coloured spots on its rump. As regards the material used, this animal is depicted on a piece of beige-ish brown hard stone. There are dark-coloured spots all over it, which seem to be foreign stones that have been inserted into the parent stone. The eyes are also represented by two red-coloured stones carved in eyeball shape and inserted into ready-drilled eye-sockets. The red stones seem to be an agate-like material, which was well known and employed by the Mongols.¹⁰ As far as the carving-style is concerned, this animal is rendered with a round nose and rump, with a deep cut underneath its neck and around one hind-leg, and crude intaglio lines on its back and head to indicate some fur. It is not highly polished. All these features will be noticed throughout the Yuan jade animals shown in later chapters of this thesis. They certainly constitute a Mongol taste in jade animal depiction. Above all, this Wild-Sheep-like animal suggests a strong naturalistic flavour of real life on the steppe.

This jade animal could have been a paperweight or just a charming jade ornament. When it was first collected by Hardinge in 1927, it had a wooden stand. This could have been made afterwards, firstly because to make wooden stands for jade objects to stand on was not a convention for jade objects in the Yuan times (Qian Weipeng, 1998, Interview), and secondly, this particular wooden stand does not appear to be very old. However, it is not totally unknown for pre-Ming jades to have wooden stands, since some Song jades are found to have wooden stands of some sort (Yang Boda, 1998, Interview).

There are further examples of sheep with magnificent horns that have emerged in various collections which demand comparison with the coiffures mentioned above, under sub-section 3.4.1, and with the Wild Sheep or Ibex, Fig. 3-2 is a neatly carved

¹⁰ The mineralogical components of this jade animal can not be identified exactly without destruction of the piece. Therefore, the stone of this animal can only be described on the basis of its physical appearance and the likely qualities of the stone.

little animal identified as a ram and dated to the Song Dynasty (Marie-Fleur Burkart-Bauer, 1986, no. 110; p. 86). Its neat round body is depicted simply and accurately to Nature. It could have been carved by a Chinese artisan, but the possibility should not be excluded that it was made during the Yuan period and under Mongol influence, as there is hardly any known obvious distinction in jade sheep of this kind between



Fig. 3-2



Fig. 3-3

those of Song and those of Yuan times (Yang Boda, 1998, Note of Interview). Fig. 3-3 is another example of the type, exhibited in Hong Kong in 1996 (Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1996, p. 118). Jade sheep are normally recumbent and of small size, probably due to the compromise required by the shapes of jade pebbles, and they are not very stylised, if at all, nor highly mythicised. Another distinctive feature of the sheep of this kind is that they are depicted with fairly realistic eyelids. This style is believed to have become popular shortly before the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 167).

To depict animals observed from the wild in a very faithful manner is one of the most noticeable

characteristics of Mongol jade-fashion, and for obvious reasons, of course. Jade animals such as the lion, horse and camel made paperweights or ornaments, which were highly appreciated. Fish, birds and even tortoises were also in favour in the making of buckles or finials. Almost all of them are depicted in naturalistic style. Some of them can even be traced to the individual living animal and show great anatomical accuracy.

3.4.3 Jade Mythical Animals

The dragon is no doubt the earliest known creature in Chinese history to come under this title. In *Er Ya Yi*, the dragon is identified by the following characteristics: horns

like a deer's, head similar to that of a camel, eyes similar to a demon's, neck elongated like that of a snake, belly like a clam's, body covered with the scales of a fish, claws like a hawk's, ears like those of a cow, and paws like a tiger's (Luo Yuan, Han Dynasty, p. 231). Each individual one of these features is from real life, not imagined, but, when assembled together, they form a fabulous creature called the dragon.

The dragon in the Yuan Dynasty had its own distinct identifiable features typified by the depiction on the David Vases made during the Yuan Dynasty (No. 17), which differed in many ways from the dragons of other times. Many dragons presented and



Fig. 3-4

discussed in this thesis strongly manifest a unique body-form and a uniquely Yuan way of decorating it. There is, for instance, a certain jade dragon displayed in a recent exhibition in Hong Kong Fig. 3-4) (Hong Kong Museum of

Art, 1996, p. 149). Although it is, in fact, just a dragon-head finial, it shows all the most distinctively characteristic features that the Yuan dragon could possibly bear. It is carved from a mottled grey-green jade with yellow-brown veins. Its head has a pointed muzzle and two antler-like horns, which look like stylised deer-horns. Its raised, stepped muzzle, eyes, eyebrows, and ears are all modelled in high relief, and its horns are carved free from the long fluttering mane below. The flowing mane is presented in almost exactly the same fashion as that of the dragon in No. 15. This style was very much in favour in Mongol times for both the depicting and the decorating of their animals. It probably echoes the Mongols' proverbially bold and unconstrained character. Another jade dragon-head finial, published in *Chinese Jades: Archaic and Modern*, evinces important similarities shared with Fig.3-4. It is in green jade, with traces of red pigment. From the front, this finial displays a dragon-head in profile, with forked prongs for horns, a long mane commented by the author of the catalogue as being "a characteristic of Song or later representations of the creature", and a fang that curves upward to push away a fold of the animal's lip (Sachs, et al, 1977, p. 138).

Another type of animal depicted in jades of the Yuan Dynasty was the animal with wings or scales or flame-decorated body. They are sometimes purely mythical animals not found in real life, and sometimes they are real animals, such as horses or pigs, but with such features as scales or wings or non-natural elements, being shown, for instance, galloping in waves or standing on clouds.



Fig. 3-5

A jade creature unearthed in 1978 from a Yuan tomb discovered in Beijiao Liucunbao, Xian City, is one example of such mythical animals (Fig. 3-5) (Yang Boda, 1993, p. 130). It is carved in white jade, with a big, slightly open mouth, and bulging eyes, all carved in full relief. On its head, it has a horn with the tip of the horn depicted curling upwards like a hook. It has an enormous chest and four powerful legs. A pair of

wings is the most attention-riveting feature of this animal. They are carved in high relief, with some intaglio lines to indicate some kind of veins of feather-type character. This creature is admired as a “strong tiger or lion” (Wang Changqi, 1993b, p. 286). Mythical animals like this are often called Avoid-Evil (*bixie* 辟邪), or sometimes translated Avoid Demon. Obviously this is an imagined animal, embodying the human hope that it might help the owner to protect himself from, or avoid, bad luck and demons. Goette believes that Avoid Evil was for exchange between friends, and symbolised the mood of the troubled 13th century AD (Goette, 1937, p. 293).

Winged animals were extensively depicted in art during the Yuan period. Since they were not realistic animals, they allowed a certain freedom in the way that the artists depicted them. Animals in No. 18 are of this kind. They are woven in silk dated to mid-13th century China (Watt, et al, 1997, p. 142). They all have strong bodies, like lions', half-standing in pairs, with their wings almost flapping, ready to fly. Humans have for thousands of years dreamt of having wings and being able to fly as free as birds. There is another winged animal exhibited in the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, England (Fig. 3-6). This animal in jade is termed a *qilin* (麒麟), sometimes

translated by Westerners as Unicorn, although, with the exception that the creature's horn in single, the Chinese "unicorn" does not much resemble the Western one.

However, this one-horned animal is another type of the traditional Chinese fabulous



Fig. 3-6

animals. It is a one-horned mythical animal, with wings sprouting from its fore-legs, and its bi-furcated tail going between its legs and up over its back. It has a very strong chest, and a large head with open mouth and most fearsome look. Its two wings are rather smaller than those of the *bixie*, but they are clearly carved in the same fashion: intaglio lines to indicate veins, and stylised form. This creature, both in its size and even in its flaws, is similar to the *bixie*, described above, in

spite of their different names. More clearly depicted, the animal in Bath has four tiger-pawed legs, displaying enormous strength, and stands on clouds, another sign of its supernatural power of flying, and perhaps that it has already flown up into the sky.

In this thesis, animals like this with wings are simply termed "winged animal" for further discussions in Chapter Eight, to avoid some confusions and ambiguities possibly caused by different definitions of unrealistic animals, and individual or personal understanding and preference.¹¹ Fig. 3-5, for example, is called "one-horned animal" in the jade catalogue by the Palace Museum, Beijing (Wang Changqi, 1993b, p. 286). Fig. 3-6, on the other hand, though very similar to Fig. 3-5, is named *qilin* by the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath (Forsyth, 1994, p. 344).

There exist so many more examples of this kind with imagined forms and features brought together from a variety of birds and animals. They are depicted in all manners of objects, such as the scaled pig on the wine vessel (Fig. 4-14), the fish-bodied dragon with wings on a belt-plaque (Fig. 7-2), and so on.

¹¹ Pope-Hennessy categorised this "winged-animal" into "winged lion", which is found in literature (Pope-Hennessy, 1923, p. 111).

In the following chapters, animals both in realistic and supernatural styles will be intensively and individually discussed regarding the significance of their shapes, their usage and their possible meanings.

CHAPTER FOUR: IMPERIAL APPLICATIONS OF JADE ANIMALS OF THE YUAN DYNASTY

4.1 IMPERIAL JADE DRAGON SEALS

In the *History of the Yuan*, there are 121 entries relating to the imperial jade seal recorded for various occasions (Song Lian, et al, 1370,). These jade seals were significantly important and, manifested the emperor's absolute and inviolable power. At the coronation of a Yuan emperor, one or more jade seals were ordered to be made for the emperor and for his reign years in the Yuan Dynasty. When Khubilai became the fifth Mongol Khan in 1260, one of the first series of imperial edicts he made was to regulate the operation of the imperial jade seal (Shi Weimin, 1994, p. 10). It was only the Khan himself or specially permitted first or second ranking officials, who could use the jade seal. Third ranking officials were only allowed the third ranking material, which was made of gold (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 121). In 1269 during Khubilai's 6th reign-year Zhiyuan, i.e. AD 1269, he instructed the jade workshop in the Yuan court to make ten imperial jade seals of different sizes.

The imperial jade seal was not only the logo of a dynasty, but, if loosing it, also a sign of being defeated. The year 1276 is officially accepted as the year that the Song Dynasty was finished and, the Mongols took over. This was signified when nobles of the Song Dynasty presented to the Mongol emperor their offers of surrender, together with twelve imperial jade seals (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 3185). The imperial jade seal was clearly taken to be a symbolic representation of sovereignty. It is for the same reason that the Yuan emperors destroyed or altered imperial jade seals which had been surrendered, captured or looted from previous regimes, to make sure in both a symbolic and very real way that the rule and glory of the preceding regime would no longer exist (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 57).

Throughout the long history of seal making in China, seals have been found made of bronze tracing back at least as far as the Shang Dynasty (16th-11th centuries BC)

(Deng Shuping, 1984, p. 78). The seal was used as a monetary form of credit in trade at that time. It was not until the Warring States period (475-221 BC) that jade began to be employed for making seals. Soon the jade's extraordinary rareness, extremely precious quality and its unique physical properties of enduring hardness, appearance, luxury and richness made it the exclusive material from which to make seals for the emperor. Hence by law, from the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) onwards, jade seals were used only by the emperor (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 370).

It was designated that the jade seal used by the emperor was to be called *xi* 玺 exclusively. In the ancient Chinese dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* (Explaining writing and elucidating characters), the character *xi* 玺 is defined as *wangzhe zhi yin ye* 王者之印也 (the seal of the emperor) (Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 688). There are several other Chinese words for “seal”, each with its own pronunciation and different characters, though meaning the same. The word for the emperor's seal *xi* 玺 cited above, contains the component *yu* 玉 which is as the lower part of its construction to indicate its material, also an independent word in its own right meaning “jade”. Since this component *yu* 玉 also embraces the character *wang* 王, which means “ruler or king of the world”, it also indicates the jade seal's invariable owner, the emperor (Ciyuan, 1992, p. 2078). Thus *xi* 玺 is quite distinct from the general words for seals, *yin* 印, *zhang* 章 or *yinzhang* 印章, which refer to the seals that could be owned by anybody.

In this connection an interesting little incident about the use of the term, the imperial jade seal occurred during the Tang Dynasty. The Tang empress Wuzetian (r.690-705AD) was not very impressed by the term *xi* 玺 which in her personal opinion, sounded like *si* 死, meaning dead. She therefore ordered the term for imperial jade *xi* 玺 to be changed to *bao* 宝 (Deng Shuping, 1984, p. 87). This was not such a bad alteration because *bao* has the meaning “treasure” which includes jade. Linguistically, the character *bao* 宝 also has imbedded within it the component *yu* 玉 which embraces the character *wang* 王. Thus the term for the imperial jade seal,

commonly used as *xi* 玺 is also not totally unknown with the term *bao* 宝 although not so widely used.

Starting in the Han Dynasty seals carved on various materials, such as gold, silver, bronze or stone, were used to indicate differences in rank (Deng Shuping, 1984, p. 79). But jade was always the material used to make the imperial seal from the Qin Dynasty (Ma Chengyuan, 1996, p. 256). In contrast to the changing of artistic styles used for ordinary seals for commoners and low ranking officials, the particular style of the imperial jade seal seemed to have been retained deliberately and vigorously resisted any secular development. It has remained in the everlasting fashion established during the Han Dynasty, and maintained its superior status for nearly 19 centuries. Thus the exceptional superbness, exclusive extravagance and sumptuousness have remained the style of the imperial jade seal as unique school of its own throughout the ages.

In the 11th to 14th centuries, the Mongol emperors applied the Qin scheme which ruled out any use of jade for seal production, unless for the use of the emperor or permitted by the emperor (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 27). The making of the Yuan imperial jade seal followed the Han blueprint, with the best possible white jade employed, and the dragon “guarding” the seal as the knob. The function and usage of imperial jade seals in the Yuan court could have well been the Tang system as recorded in the *New Book of the Tang*. It reads:

天子有传国玺，皆玉为之。神玺以镇中国，藏而不用。受命玺以封禅封神，皇帝行玺以报王公书，皇帝之玺以劳王公，天子行玺以报四夷，天子之玺以劳四夷，天子信玺以召兵四夷。(Ouyang Xiu, et al, 1060, p. 524)

The Son of Heaven has Seals for Sending to the States, all made of jade. The Divine Seal was for “holding down” China, and kept in storage and not used. The Receipt-of-Mandate Seal is used for Accession Sacrifices and Entitlements of Deities. The Emperor’s Issued Seal was used to respond to written communications from his princes and lords. The Emperor’s Seal was used to comfort his princess and lords. The Son of Heaven Issued Seal was used to in respond to peoples outside China. The Son of Heaven’s Seal was used for comforting peoples outside China. The Son of Heaven’s

Trust Seal was used for recruiting soldiers from peoples outside China.

Unfortunately, archaeological excavations have revealed hardly any imperial jade seals of the Yuan rulers, largely due to the Mongols' secret burial tradition (Chapter One). Nevertheless, a number of imperial jade seals of the Yuan period, adequately enough to present the political connotation and material aesthetics at the time, have, however, been bequeathed to us. They are mostly jade seals granted to eminent Tibetan monks by the Yuan emperors (Shi Shuqing, 1996, pp. 430-434). They have been carefully preserved in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, the Buddhist holy place where sacred objects are treasured.¹ According to the definition recorded above in the *New Book of the Tang*, these jade seals are classified as *shou ming xi* 授命玺 (Issued Seal) (Ouyang Xiu, et al, 1060, p. 524).

The Yuan Emperor Shizu Khubilai himself, was a passionate Buddhist, and so were the subsequent Yuan emperors (Shi Weimin, 1994, p. 34). Buddhism² received particular patronage during the Yuan period. Conferring jade seals to eminent Tibetan Buddhist monks was a quite common activity of the Yuan emperors.

¹ In Tibet, there has been a tradition of making sculptures of Lamas or sages painted in gold, within which their corpses have been encased. Even though Buddhist sages have been dead for many years, their sculpture-encased bodies still remain seated high up in the Potala Palace, "with" us. Their personal belongings, as distinct from special burial articles, are also kept beside these sculptures, to demonstrate their continued presence and influence. Among these articles, there are a number of imperial jade seals granted by the Mongol emperors of the Yuan Dynasty, and these have been kept well-preserved through the ages. Although they are jade seals bestowed upon the eminent Tibetan monks, they were carved in the Yuan Court under the Mongol emperors' orders, and have reflected the Mongols' taste. They constitute a rare display of Mongol imperial jade-work and its unique and artistically impressive designs.

² The Buddhism of the Yuan Dynasty differed from Chinese Buddhism (Shi Weimin, 1996, p. 96). The Mongols' Buddhism, especially since the first Yuan Emperor Shizu (Khubilai), became more or less a branch of the Tibetan Lamaist Buddhism called the Sa-skyapa Sect. The Mongols were very attracted to the philosophy and colourful and complicated ceremonies of the Tibetan Sa-skyapa. Most Mongol Emperors and nobles, including Khubilai himself, were disciples of this Tibetan Lamaist Buddhism.

4.1.1 The Mongols and Tibetan

The relationship between the Mongols and Tibetans opened its historical page in 1247 when the Tibetan religious representative Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan made a political deal to the Mongol's sovereignty in Tibet via the leadership of Tibetan Lamaism - the Sa-skya-pa Sect (Luo Xianyao, 1996, p. 317). This reinforced, to a large degree, the Mongol-Tibetan political partnership, as well as friendship. It was a mutual need both for the Mongols to keep Tibet stable and obedient; and for Tibet to avoid nomads looting and massacre.

In the year 1236, Mongol Khan Öködei (r.1229-1241) granted the area of today's Ningxia, parts of Gansu and Shaanxi Provinces where the Xixia State had been established (1033-1234), to his son Kadan as a fief (Luo Xianyao, 1996, p. 315). In 1239, Kadan sent his troops to the northern Tibet and they carried everything before them. A few Tibetan temples were burnt down and many Tibetans were killed and their homes were looted. The Mongols rapidly took over the upper reaches of the Lhasa River (Luo Xianyao, 1996, p. 316). The Mongol's blood-thirst and the consequent killing made the Tibetans react quickly. The eminent monk, Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan, the leader of the Sa-skya-pa Sect of Tibetan Buddhism decided in 1240 to take his two young nephews with him to meet the Mongols and to pledge allegiance to the Mongols before Tibet could be completely wiped out (Li Jie, 1962, p. 308). It took Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan and his nephews, Phags-pa and Qianatuji six years of cold and poverty walking in nomad's land to eventually reach Lanzhou (Gansu Province today). They were well received by the Mongols and as a consequence, during the meeting with Kadan, an agreement between the Mongols and the Tibetans was reached. Tibet was to become a Mongol possession; religious or non-religious officials or commoners in the land of Tibet were to become the subjects of Mongol rulers. In return for this "favour", the Sa-skya-pa Sect of Tibetan Buddhism was appointed by the Mongol Khan as the leading and dominant Tibetan Lamaism. Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan's hard work and efforts were thus repaid (Luo Xianyao, 1996, p. 317).

The Tibetan form of Buddhism had many elements absent from Chinese Buddhism or the Mongol's own religion, Shamanism, which was a pantheistic animism widely practised by the nomadic peoples of north Asia (Yu Chunfang, 1982, p. 419). The Mongols were much attracted to the magical power, authority, and prestige of the religious hierarchy of the new religion, and were highly impressed by the colourful ceremonies and mysterious prayer that the Tibetan Lamaism employed (Stoddard, 1995, p. 208). It was much more appealing to the Mongol mind than the subtle philosophy and unconventional conduct of Chinese Buddhism. Moreover, from a racial viewpoint perhaps, the Mongols felt a closer affinity to the Tibetans than to the Chinese (Yu Chun-fang, 1982, p. 398).

The individual who built up Tibetan influence at the Mongol court was Phags-pa (named Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan)(1239-1280),³ one of the nephews of Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan. It is recorded in the *History of the Yuan*, that at a very young age, Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan was learning the Tibetan scriptures with his uncle and was able to read many thousands of words of Buddhist bible when he was only seven years old (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4517). As a consequence of this, he was recognised as Phags-pa, which in the Tibetan language meant "Holy Child" (Su Luge et al, 1995, p. 36). Phags-pa became the successor to his uncle after the death of Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan and became the new leader of Sa-skya-pa Sect in 1251. Shortly after, he met the Mongol leader Khubilai, who was on his military campaign against Dali, in present-day Yunnan Province (Luo Xianyou, 1996, p. 320). Khubilai was so highly impressed by Phags-pa's holy air, that the event was recorded in the *History of Yuan*:

与语大悦，日见亲礼。(Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4518.)

³ The date of birth of Phags-pa is sometimes recorded as in 1235 (Wang Puren, et al, 1987, p. 61).

He (Khubilai) was delighted when he spoke with him (Phags-pa), gave him (Phags-pa) daily audience and accorded him (Phags-pa) personal courtesy.

4.1.2 Phags-pa

Khubilai became the fifth Mongol Khan in 1260 and this doubtlessly strengthened Phags-pa's political position in the Mongol court after seven years of constant contact with Khubilai (Wang Puren & Chen Qingying, 1987, p. 69). One of the consequences of Khubilai's coronation was that Phags-pa was granted the title of "State Preceptor" together with a jade Seal of Authorisation (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 68). It was issued by Emperor Shizu Khubilai himself in the first year of the Mongol reign-period Zhongtong, i.e. AD 1260.

The jade seal of the State Preceptor (Fig. 4-1) has a superb one-horned dragon on the top as its knob. The dragon's two forelimbs are neatly and attractively placed forwards with both paws together beneath the head. Its body is very well polished all over. A graceful red silk string is attached to the jade dragon seal, with an elegant tassel at each end of it. On the jade dragon seal, it reads, in Phags-pa Script⁴ (in *Zhuanshu*):

国师之印

"Seal of the State Preceptor"



Fig. 4-1a



Fig. 4-1b

⁴ Phags-pa was ordered by the Yuan Emperor Shizu (Khubilai) to create a writing system for the Mongolian language. In 1269, Phags-pa finished inventing the Mongolian writing language, based on the Tibetan alphabets (Qiu Shuseng, 1995, p. 247). Characters of this language are called Phags-pa Script or Mongolian New Words.

Later in 1269, Phags-pa was again promoted and granted the title of “Imperial Preceptor” following the fulfilment of the Emperor Khubilai’s order to create the “Mongolian New Words” (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4518). With this title, another imperial jade dragon seal was awarded to him. The already very high religious status of Phags-pa was elevated further and, in an unprecedented fashion he was raised to the highest possible position to that only just beneath the Emperor Khubilai. In other words, Phags-pa was superior to everybody under heaven, except the person who had granted this title, the Emperor himself. It is historically interesting to note that the jade seal of the Imperial Preceptor was created by reworking the State Seal of Xixia State (1033-1234), which had been defeated by the Mongols. It was now altered to a hexagon-sided seal with a knob on the top and seal writing on the bottom (Zheng Shan, 1992, pp. 93-94).

Phags-pa’s work in creating the “Mongolian New Words” was indeed quite a significant contribution to the Yuan emperor and the Mongol Dynasty. Throughout their earlier history, the Mongols never had their own written language, except for some symbols which used to be carved on wood to help memorise things (Meng He, Song Dynasty, p. 2; Shi Weimin, 1996, p. 47). The language they used at that time was said to be “sounds without words” (Peng Daya, Ming Dynasty, p. 6). Their nomadic culture and literature was conveyed from generation to generation orally, so the tales, stories, songs, aphorisms and other oral folklore is common among them (Otgonbayar, 1997. P. 213). The positive side of this is likely to that it made the Mongols extremely good at oral folklore and gave them the great power of generalisation (Sharma, 1997, p. 79). However, the down side was that they could not run their vast empire on horse back without a unified language to facilitate correspondence and administration. The emergence of Phags-pa provided the Mongol emperor with a golden opportunity to create a Mongol written language. Phags-pa accepted this huge assignment by the Emperor and fulfilled it in 1269 after nearly

ten-years of hard work. What he created was a script based on Tibetan letters, (Amubartu, 1997, p. 17), a thousand Mongol square-shaped words with forty-one alphabets⁵ (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4518). Though it was far from comprehensive, it was highly regarded, and the Yuan Emperor Khubilai defined it as the Mongol New Words:

自今以往，凡有玺书颁降者，并用蒙古新字，仍各以其国字付，遂升号八思巴曰大宝法王更赐玉印。(Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4518).

From now on, any publication of the imperial documents, has to be in the Mongol New Words, with the assistance of each country's own words. Then promoted Phags-pa Dabao Buddha Master awarded him again jade seal.

This event was also recorded by Ye Ziqi in his book of *Sir Plants-and-trees*: “The barbarian Monk Phags-pa of the Yuan Western Regions, assisted the Yuan Emperor Shizu and has made Mongol written language which is on the basis of seven tones. He is granted the title of Imperial Preceptor, under one person (the Emperor) and above the ten thousands (the whole nation)” (Ye Ziqi, 1516, p. 65).

The Mongol New Words, also called the Phags-pa Script, was eventually not put into wide use due to the inconvenient and complicated square shapes of its words (Amur Barto, 1997, p. 17). However, it did become a major written language for imperial seal cutting from the Yuan Dynasty (Ma Chenyuan, 1996, pp.270-271). At the early

⁵ Phags-pa New Words was never fully implemented even in the Yuan Dynasty because of its shortcomings, such as not adequate words and complicated writing. By law and imperial compulsory order, Phags-pa New Words was then put into practice in documentation, sculpture cutting, Mongol notes, seal writings and so on, it was at the same time used with languages of Chinese, Uygur, Mogol letters and other nationalities' languages to make it workable (Wu En, 1987, p. 102). The Mongolian language was first time beginning to be shaped in 1307 by a linguistic Jihansir, who tried to have combined letters of Uygur and Mongolian. This was the primitive form of the Mongolian written language, and then with hundreds of years of development, it has become nowadays-modern Mongolian language. Petrov believes that the Mongols could not boast of a single publication until 1924, because there was simply no proper and sophisticated written Mongolian language available (Petrov, 1970, p. 125).

stage, the Phags-pa Script was carved in the regular seal cutting script called *zhuan shu* 篆书, represented in Fig. 4-1. It, later on, came after a special seal cutting style, called *jiudiezhuan* 九叠篆. It is well represented in Fig. 4-4 and Fig. 4-6. The *jiudiezhuan* was originally adopted in order to fill the entire area of a large seal, each stroke of a character could be twisted as many as nine times. It is believed to have emerged from the Sui Dynasty (581-618), when their official seals became larger and larger in size (Ma Chenyuan, 1996, p. 262). *Jiudiezhuan* received some constant reservations from seal connoisseurs ever since its apparition because of its rigid and over elaborate arrangement.⁶ It, however, found favour in the Mongol emperor's eye. The jade seals carved in *jiudiezhuan* in this thesis have demonstrated a distinctive taste of the imperial seal cutting of extraordinary characters of Phags-pa Script during the Yuan Dynasty.

4.1.3 The State and Imperial Preceptor

It was an integral part of life in the Yuan court for the Mongol emperors to order the carving of jade dragon seals and to grant them to eminent Tibetan monks, together with the title of the State Preceptor or Imperial Preceptor (Wang Gang, 1995, p. 83). As indicated above, this convention started with the first Yuan emperor Shizhu Khubilai who specially favoured the Sa-skyapa Sect of Tibetan Buddhism and honoured its head Lama Phags-pa first as the State Preceptor followed by the title of the Imperial Preceptor (Jagchid, 1997, p. 140). He set the precedent for all subsequent emperors of the Yuan Dynasty, who appointed the State or/and Imperial Preceptor chosen from the Tibetan lamas. Throughout the Yuan Dynasty, the title of Imperial Preceptors was granted to 12 eminent Tibetan Lamas (Appendix 10:

⁶ There is a newly published imperial jade seal, dated to the Yuan Dynasty, which has its seal carving in Chinese language *jing yan jiang guang* 经筵讲官 (Spoken Officer) (Fig. 4-16). The fashion of rendering these four characters is more of *zhuan shu* rather than *jiudiezhuan*.

Imperial Preceptors).⁷ They were all from Sa-skya Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Each Yuan emperor chose and appointed his own (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 4518-4519), and with each bestowal of the imperial title, one or more jade dragon seals of office were issued.

The invention of the State Preceptor was, according to the historical records, conferred for the first time, during the Northern Qi Dynasty (550-577), when the Qi emperor awarded an eminent monk Fachang as his State Preceptor (Shi Shuqing, 1996, p. 430). It thereafter became a tradition for Chinese emperors to confer this title or something like it every now and then upon highly respected and powerful religious leaders or officials. The Mongols learned of this practice and are believed to have adopted it, when the Mongol Khan Mönke (r.1251-1259) granted Kashmirian monk Namo the State Preceptor in Xixia State (Zheng Shan, 1992, p. 93). The fact that Phags-pa was appointed the Imperial Preceptor and given the suitably modified jade seal of the former State of Xixia, not only demonstrated the superior status of the Tibetan Lama, but also provided some evidence of how the Mongols adopted the tradition of granting the office of Preceptor (Luo Xianyou, 1996, p. 323).

Tibetan Buddhism reached a higher status during the Yuan Dynasty than during any other dynasty (Luo Xianyou, 1996, p. 324). This was demonstrated by the superior position and extraordinary privilege of the State Preceptor and Imperial Preceptor all of whom were Tibetan Buddhist monks (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 154). Politically, Tibetan Buddhism, effectively the Sa-skya-pa Sect was granted the complete and absolute authority to legitimately administrate all institutional, legal, and social aspects of religions in Tibet. *Xuan zheng yuan* 宣政院 (The Commission for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs) was set up in 1264 and was constantly improved until

⁷ The record of 12 Imperial Preceptors is derived from *History of the Yuan* (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 4518-4519). A second account is 13 Imperial Preceptors granted in the Yuan Dynasty (Zheng Shan,

1288 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2193). The Imperial Preceptor was appointed to be the head of this commission (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4520). It was a Mongol idea to have combine politics with religion in one body. Thus the Imperial Preceptor was automatically not only the religious leader but also the head of the administrative authority. As the dominant religious doctrine, both in Tibet and China, eminent Tibetan monks from the Sa-skyapa Sect were appointed Imperial Preceptor over not only Tibet, but the entire Empire (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4518).



Fig. 4-2a



Fig. 4-2b

The Preceptors of the State or Empire were awarded a jade dragon seal as the symbol of their superior

authority. In *History of the Yuan*, it is recorded that a jade dragon seal (Fig. 4-2) was granted by the Yuan Emperor Chengzong Temür to Chilasipa Hanjier (乞剌斯八翰节儿) when he became the Imperial Preceptor in 1295 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4519). This seal was of white jade of two dragons dancing together. Their bodies twisted around one another to form a hole as a knob of the seal, and it had a string with two tassels attached to it. Each dragon has large eyes, an enormous square mouth and three-digit claws.

The seal reads in Phags-pa Script in *Zhuanshu*

大元帝师统领诸国僧尼中兴释教之印

“Seal of Zhongxing⁸ Buddhism of the Imperial Preceptor of Buddhist Monks and Nuns of the Various Countries of the Great Yuan”

1992, p. 96; Yu Chunfang, 1982, p. 419). A third report is 14 (Luo Xianyou, 1996, p. 324). The fourth one is accounting 10 Imperial Proceptors (Chen Qingying, 1991, pp. 8-16).

⁸ Zhongxing being the name of a *lu* - province - during the Yuan dynasty. Set up during the Yuan, it extended from east of the present-day Zhijiang county in Hubei province to Qianjiang County in Hubei. Its provincial capital was on the site of present-day Jiangling.

This established the legitimate and solid foundation for the Sa-skyapa Sect to be and remain the only sacred and inviolable religious leader in the whole Mongol Empire. The imperial patronage of Tibetan Buddhism extended to an unprecedentedly limitless degree. It is documented in *History of the Yuan* that in the almost hundred years of the Yuan Dynasty, there appeared to have been no limit to the extent that the court respected and trusted the Imperial Preceptor. From the emperor and empress down to the imperial concubines and princes, all accepted Buddhist precepts and paid obeisance to the Preceptor. During formal meetings for example, when all ministers and officials stood in rows, the Imperial Preceptor alone was permitted to sit on a special seat at the side of the emperor (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 4520-4521).

However, not all of the Preceptors of Tibetan monks could enjoy the highest possible paramount authority and supreme privilege during the Yuan Dynasty. There seems to have been two rankings, senior and junior, among the highest religious leaders. Fig. 4-3 illustrates an imperial jade dragon seal, which was granted in the 16th year of the reign-period Zhizheng, i.e. 1356, of the Yuan Dynasty to a second ranking preceptor. It was awarded to a Tibetan monk called Quejijianzan 却吉坚赞, the first son of one of the Imperial Preceptors, Gongge Jianzan 贡葛坚赞 who was the Imperial Preceptor in the second reign-period, i.e. 1315, of the Yuan Dynasty (Song Lian et al, 1370, 568; Shi Shuqing, 1996, p. 432).

It reads in Phags-pa Scrip in *Zhuanshu*:



Fig. 4-3a



Fig. 4-3b

统领释教大元国师

“State Preceptor of in Charge of All Buddhism of the Great Yuan”

The wording of this jade seal represents those given to the second ranking of the Preceptor in the Yuan period. The promotion of Phags-pa from the State Preceptor demonstrated the senior ranking of the Imperial Preceptor to the State Preceptor. Nevertheless, the State Preceptor's jade seal was still a splendid imperial glory. This one is pale green with a one-horned dragon. The dragon's arched body forms a hole beneath its abdomen, and a red silk string with two tassels goes through the hole attached to the seal. Even though the dragon's body looks rather thin in comparison with the splendid tassels, its powerful physique is none the less evident.

Though the State Preceptor was junior to the Imperial Preceptor, religiously they were both the head of the Buddhist church, and also, in fact, the religious teachers of the Yuan emperor (Zheng Shan, 1992, p. 94). It is recorded in Tibetan sources that Khubilai was initiated into monastic life by Phags-pa (Zheng Shan, 1992, p. 94). It is also noted that not only Khubilai but also his princes and princesses were all initiated

into monastic life by Phags-pa, secretly (Shi Nianchang, Yuan Dynasty, p. 237, Luo Xianyou, 1996, p. 320). These events were also recorded in the *History of the Yuan* (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4521).



Fig. 4-4a

Additional hard evidence for these reports is the existence of an imperial jade seal of the State Preceptor of Anointment (Fig. 4-4) which has been kept in Lhasa, Tibet ever since.



Fig. 4-4b

It reads in Phags-pa Script in *Jiudiezhuang*:

灌顶国师之印

“Seal of State Preceptor of Anointment”

This pale green jade seal is in the form of a stylised *chi* dragon. In Chinese legend, the *chi* was a dragon without horns (*Ciyuan*, 1992, p. 2781). But being without horns does not make this dragon less exquisite.

The Yuan Emperor Taiding Yesün-temür (r.1324-1328) conferred on the eminent Tibetan monk of the Sa-skya-pa Sect Kaizun-nangalibi the title of “the State Preceptor of Anointment” in the first year of the reign-period Taiding, i.e.1324 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 660). Emperor Taiding was said to be a dedicated Buddhist and it is recorded that he and his royal family received the Anointment by Tibetan monks several times (Li Dongfang, 1997, p. 264). According to *History of the Yuan*, the Emperor Yesün-temür’s wife, Empress Yilianzhengbala was initiated by the Imperial Preceptor in the second year of reign-period Taiding, i.e.1325 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 660).

Anointment is said to have originated as a ceremony in ancient India, which was carried out when kings ascended the throne. The king had “the Water of Four Seas” poured over the top of his head, as a propitious act to wish good fortune on this reign.



Fig. 4-5a

The Esoteric Sect (*Mizong* 密宗) of Tibetan Buddhism adopted this ceremony, and practised it in their activities (Shi Shuqing, 1996, p. 432). The fact that Kaizun-nangalibi was granted the title of “the State Preceptor of Anointment” by the Yuan Emperor Taiding Yesür was evidence that the Mongol rulers, via Tibetan Buddhism adopted the ancient Indian anointment.



Fig. 4-5b

Sometimes the Preceptor’s jade seal was engraved with its owner’s name instead of its owner’s heading, in a way, like an “I.D card” rather than a “job description” as the case of the previously discussed seals which had titles and assignments on them. When Chilasipa Hanjier

乞刺斯八翰节儿, the 5th Imperial Preceptor died in 1303 and his nephew Sangjiebei

桑结贝 was then appointed as Imperial Preceptor also with a jade dragon seal (Fig. 4-5) in the 9th year of the reign-period Dade, i.e.1305, the Yuan Dynasty. He served in this post for each of the three Mongol emperors, Chengzong Temü (r.1295-1307), Wuzong Qaisan (r.1307-1311) and Renzong Ayurbarwada (r.1311-1320). On his jade dragon seal, it reads in Phags-pa Script in *Zhuanshu*:

桑结贝帝师印

“Seal of the Imperial Preceptor Sangjiebei”

This pale green jade has a finely carved dragon on its top, serving as a knob. The dragon has its head turned backward towards its tail. The animal is recumbent with its body arched to form a hole with the seal base. It is carved in a smooth manner, with some simple but very streamlined features. This gives this dragon a great deal of vitality, and a strong but supple flexibility. What is unique about this jade seal is that this seal-writing, has the owner's name carved to address the Imperial Preceptor; and underneath the line of “Seal of the Imperial Preceptor Sangjiebei” a design of thunder cloud veins presented, which is very rare in surviving Yuan seal-carving (Shi Shuqing, 1996, p. 431).

4.1.4 The Dragon and the Colour White

The imperial jade seal, almost by definition, has a dragon on top of it, serving as a knob to hold it by. The dragon, *long* 龍 is one of the oldest and most frequently used mythical creatures found in Chinese art. Since ancient times the dragon has been connected with water and rain and consequently has been regarded as the symbol of fecundity and fertility (Jan Wirgin, 1979, p. 186). By the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the dragon motif had already been in use for two millennia (Jan Wirgin, 1979, p. 186). In the Yuan Dynasty, the dragon evolved several different variants in the way in which it was depicted and functioned, and these have provided insights on the Mongol attitudes. The dragon motif grew from primitive attempts to control hunting and agricultural activities into a series of more elaborate religious and political

beliefs (He Xingliang, 1992, p. 375). Its image, originally as a public totem of Nature was subsumed by the rulers, who laid claim to their possession of it, and declared themselves as incarnations of the dragon with a sacred and inviolable power (Amur Barto, 1997, p. 79). The dragon was chosen almost throughout the Chinese dynasties, including the Yuan period, to exclusively demonstrate absolute power and supremacy. Its exclusive imperial significance suited the purpose of the imperial seal, and its form was well designed to display its owner's superior and supernatural power.

The material of the imperial jade seals presented in this chapter has been mostly of jade found in the Kunlun Mountains in the region of Yarkand and Khotan (Chapter Two). Their soft, white-ish, moist look, and waxy, translucent appearance indicate that they are of their prime quality (Jiang Renhua et al, 1994, p. 62). The colour white or white-ish green seems to have been the favourite colours of the Mongols (Bao Yuxiang, 1997, p. 256), certainly with which, to make imperial jade seals. There are references to several white objects, which present a supernatural nature, recorded in *The Secret History of the Mongols*. Paragraph 63 in this Mongolian prehistoric legend mentions a "white gerfalcon" holding both sun and moon, as an indicator of good omen (*The Secret History of the Mongols*, 1240, p. 15). And, in paragraph 80 there is mentions of a "white rock" to indicate a ritual and supernatural predestination (*The Secret History of the Mongols*, 1240, p. 25). The colour white several times appeared accompanying some momentous events and became the privilege of the clans with ancient genealogy in the period of Chingis Khan, and it always held spiritual significance (Fedotov, 1997, p. 19). In Mongolia, there is a festival called "White Festival" throughout the history sometime around February when everybody wears white clothes and sends gifts to one another in the colour white (Namujila, 1995, p. 4). In a traditionally Mongolian wedding, the bride's mate sings: "What is the symbol of purity?", the best man replies, also in singing: "The horse milk first in the morning is the symbol of purity." The bride mate sings again: "What is the best gift for the bride?", the best man then replies: "The jade white horse chosen from Chingis Khan's cavalry horses." (Cai Zhichun et al, 1993, p. 294).

The Mongols preferred the colour white and the Khotan jade's superior white lustre was therefore, not surprisingly, the quality to have been chosen for the imperial jade seal.

In *Old Regulation of the Han* (*Hanjiuyi* 汉旧仪), the imperial jade seal was regulated as: 玺皆白玉，螭虎钮， “xi 玺 (the imperial jade seal) is always of white jade with *chihu* knob” (Wei Hong, *Han Dynasty*, p. 23). *Chihu*, as explained in *Er Ya*, is alternative term for the *chi* dragon, another type of dragon (Jan Wirgin, 1979, p. 186). In appearance, the *chi* dragon is quite different from the *long* dragon. Its general physical shape of the *chi* dragon, particularly typical of the Yuan Dynasty is like that of a lizard with an extraordinary large-headed small face. A scaly serpentine body, four legs with clawed feet and a large head with horns, are among the characteristics commonly shared by the long dragon. However, some of the imperial jade dragon seals discussed above are classified as *chi* dragons (Fig. 4-1; Fig. 4-3; Fig. 4-4 & Fig. 4-5) by the “*Chinese Dictionary of Cream of Relics - Gold, Silver,*

Jade, Stone”(Shi Shuqing, 1996, pp. 430-433), even though the creatures depicted on these jade seals are unmistakably the *long* dragon.



Fig. 4-6a

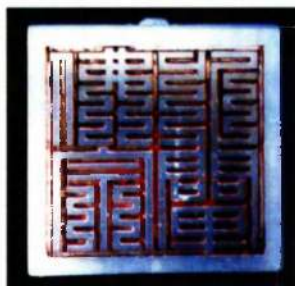


Fig. 4-6b

White jade, especially mutton-fat jade from Khotan or Yarkand, has long been regarded as the best quality of jade because of its superior appearance (Liu Datong, *Song Dynasty*, p. 259). The combination of the dragon, which is associated with supernatural power, and of the most precious of stones, jade, was a way of conveying, through exceptional aesthetic charm, the possession of supernatural power and cosmic authenticity.

A photograph of an imperial jade dragon seal obtained from the Chinese Embassy in 1998 demonstrates these particular qualities very well (Fig. 4-6). This imperial jade dragon seal is in the private collection of Mr. Chen Jun.⁹ It is a piece of semi-translucent mutton-fat jade. The knob of the seal is a recumbent dragon. Its mouth is square and flat at the front, with a most frightening appearance. Its two eyes are incised and round, staring straight ahead with great power. There are two horns on top of its head. A long, heavy mane covers the dragon's back and touches its hind limb. Its hind legs are beneath its body, while its front legs stretch forward. This makes the dragon's lean and elongated body arch and it seems to be about to pounce. The dragon's arched body forms a ring with the seal's base, and a string with fine tassels is attached to it.

The seal reads in Phags-pa Script in *Jiudiezhuang*:

弘禅佛宗

“Vast Meditation Buddhism”

This sumptuous jade dragon seal was examined in 1997 by experts at the Beijing Palace Museum, and following appraisal it was identified as a Mongol imperial jade dragon seal showing evidence of Yuan court craftsmanship (Appendix 4: Interview - Mr. Wang Yanshen and Mr. Qian Weipeng, 1997). The long and heavy mane coincides with the Mongol's favourite concept of the images of the dragon and lion. This fantasy presented in Nos. 15 and 16 has already been discussed. The animal on this seal is vigorous and forceful, thereby exhibiting the most significant characteristics of the Yuan dragon. These are in contrast to the rather the finely

⁹ I managed to obtain a photo of this jade dragon seal from the Cultural Section of the Chinese Embassy in London. However, I was told by Mr. Wang Yanshen, the First Secretary of the Cultural Section of the Chinese Embassy that for security reasons it was not possible for me to see or inspect this jade seal in person.

carved and highly polished dragon of the Song period, and extravagant and elaborate dragon of the Ming period (Zhou Nanquan, 1994. pp. 372-380).



Fig. 4-7

It is pertinent to comment briefly here on another jade dragon seal published in the transaction of the Oriental Ceramic Society in 1975 which has until now been dated to the 14th to 15th century (Fig. 4-7) (Oriental Ceramic Society, 1975, p. 104). This is a superbly luxurious looking creature despite its

representation in black and white photograph. The dragon's arched body and large head conveys an impression of its enormous strength; its mouth is slightly open and its upper lip marginally curled up, demonstration of flehmen (Chapter Eight). There is no mention of the form of seal cutting, or if indeed there is any.

4.1.5 Jade Ya Seal

After the Mongols conquered China, and during their attempts to control this enormous empire of central and eastern Europe, one of their most common and pervasive administrative practices was the use of the Yuan system of Overseers (doruhachi, rendered in Chinese as *daluhuachi* 达鲁花赤, and translated by the Chinese as *zhangyinguan* 掌印官, "seal-holding official"). With few exceptions, every civil service agency, at all levels of the government, had its Overseer, in addition to its nominal head. No document of importance was issued from such an agency without the Overseer's approval (Hucker, 1985, p. 59; Endicoll-West, 1989, p. 110; Shi Weimin, 1996, p. 5). Each seal normally had its owner's surname carved in *kaishu* 楷书 (a style of Chinese calligraphy used in seal cutting script), *caoshu* 草书 (a different style of Chinese calligraphy in seal cutting script), *zhuanshu* 篆书 (a style of Chinese calligraphy used in seal cutting script), or in Phags-pa Script, which could also be engraved in the Chinese seal carving styles of *kaishu*, *caoshu* or *zhuanshu* (Ma Chenyuan, 1996, p. 271). Fig. 4-3, Fig. 4-4 and Fig. 4-5, for example, are all carved in Phags-pa Script engraved in *zhuanshu* style.

However, most Mongols were illiterate. In addition, many of the foreigners, classified as *Semu* 色目 (coloured Eye people or colour-eyed people) by the Mongols, who inhabited this vast Mongol empire, could not write in Chinese, or indeed in any other language. Hence, the seal with the “sign” language, called *ya* 押, was used in lieu of a signature, and was employed to help remedy their inability to write (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 27). This “sign” language of the seal was a very distinctive feature and in widespread usage of Mongol administration during the Yuan Dynasty due to Mongol’s illiterate status (Yang Boda, 1993a, p. 17).¹⁰ This is why this type of seal is commonly called Yuan *ya*. It only refers to the seal with the special symbol seal cutting. Some *ya* was inscribed on jade for the use of the

foremost and specially privileged officials in the Yuan court (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 27).¹¹



Fig. 4-8a



Fig. 4-8b

There is a jade dragon *ya* in the Qing court collection (Fig. 4-8).¹² On the bottom of this jade seal, there is a single stroke symbol and a character-like symbol carved in relief to form a *ya*. Although this does not mean anything specific in the written scripts of the period, it is in the form of a seal-character which was typical of the Mongol times (Yang Boda, 1993, p. 17). This whitish pale green jade has a dragon with its back violently arched over recumbent on top of

¹⁰ In some records, it is believed that *ya* began as early as the Warring State Dynasty (*Ciyuan*, 1992, p. 1238). Yang Boda argued that *ya* was first seen in Yingli second reign-year, e.g. 952, the Wudai Dynasty (907-960) without presenting its sources (Yang Boda, 1993a, p. 17), when Sun Weizu believed that it was started in the Northern Song Dynasty (Sun Weizu, 1996, p. 261).

¹¹ The *ya* seal was also sometimes made of agate used in the Yuan court. An agate *ya* with a dragon as its knob, for example, found in Tianjing Art Gallery is one of this kind (Li Dongwan ed., 1997, p. 153). It is not selected for this thesis, because of its missing original record and non-jade material.

¹² This jade seal (Fig. 4-8) shares a strong resemblance with jade seal in Fig. 4-16, which is a heirloom from imperial collection in Shanghai Museum (Catalogue of Jade).

the seal base. The three-digit claws of the dragon's forelimbs touch the front edge of the jade. The dragon's head is wide and square. It is bowed over to touch its front claws. The dragon has a huge, very long mane draped along its back and a long tail with three ends. The two side ends curl along each side of its body, and the middle strand of the tail-end points up and forwards, its tip touching the end of the mane. This splendid dragon seal represents the features typical of the *ya* used in the Yuan court.

There is another jade dragon *ya* in the collection of the City Art Gallery, Bristol, which was published in the *Transaction of the Oriental Ceramic Society* in 1975 (Fig. 4-9). It is a pale greenish-white jade with some dark brown striations and markings.



Fig. 4-9a



Fig. 4-9b

The dragon on the seal is recumbent with its two front legs stretching forward. The animal's mane, its square mouth and fearsome eyes, its hairy tail and two hind limbs share a lot in common with the dragon of the previous jade dragon *ya*. On the bottom of the seal, there is a symbol composed of two parts. The first half on the left side, is like a gourd with a very long stalk bending over to the left to touch the ground; the second half on the right side resembles a stylised capital letter K. It almost looks like the trade mark of "Kellogg", but the vertical stroke has a little hook at the end and

the line running obliquely towards the ground is very short. In stead of touching the ground, it stops half way, and a round dot is present beneath the oblique line. This jade dragon *ya* was briefly described and is correctly dated to the 14th century in *Chinese Jade throughout the Ages - An Exhibition Organised by the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Oriental Ceramic Society* (Oriental Ceramic Society, 1975, p. 104).

It is therefore of some interest that *Investigation of Illustration of Ancient Jades* illustrates a wood block print apparently representing the identical jade dragon *ya* and its seal symbol script (No. 19) (Wu Dacheng, 1889, p. 685). The book reads: 玉押, 白玉漫点 (Jade *ya*, white jade with reddish marks). The appearance and pattern of physical feature of the jade matches the one in Bristol. The dragon represented in the wood block print could have been the model of the dragon on the jade. It is more likely that the diagram in the book represents the appearance of the Bristol jade *ya*.

One of the most known and quoted jade books in the last 100 years or so has been *Investigation of Illustration of Ancient Jades* by Wu Dacheng in 1889. It is a catalogue of Wu Dacheng's own jade collection together with some jades collected by his friends. In the preface, he said that he examined and studied every piece of jade that he had obtained; and he also tried to track down its source and originality (Wu Dacheng, 1889, p. 2). The drawings of the jades in this book were done by one of his cousins, and are said to be very accurate (Deng Shuping, 1992, p. 6). The jade collections described in the book went missing or were lost several times due to the war between China and Japan (Deng Shuping, 1992, p. 7). However, they have been rediscovered and confirmed that many of the jades, which ended up in Western museums, were indeed from Wu Dacheng's collection or objects described by him in *Investigation of Illustration of Ancient Jades*. It, therefore, does not come as a great surprise that the Bristol jade *ya* (Fig. 4-9) was one of those described ones in the book and subsequently lost. Unfortunately, the jade *ya* (No. 19) in the *Investigation of Ancient Jades* could not be investigated thoroughly enough to have a date and provenance attributed to it. It may have been one of those jades that he tried in vain to track down its source and origin.

Whatever the final outcome, the jade *ya* in Bristol (Fig. 4-9) and the drawing of the jade *ya* in *Investigation of Ancient Jades* each strongly portray a number of the Mongol *ya*'s characteristics. Both vigorous depiction of the imperial dragon and the

symbol cutting of the seal were the Mongol's favourite and most trusted ways of expressing their authority in China.

Archaeological evidence shows that the jade *ya* in the Yuan period was not exclusively used with the Yuan emperor's permission by illiterate Mongols or foreigners, *daluhuachi* (seal-holding officials). They were also used, with good reasons, by specially provided Chinese. The jade tiger *ya* of Fig. 4-10 is a good example.

This jade tiger *ya* was unearthed from a tomb in Qipanshan Mountain, Anqing City, Anhui Province in 1956. In the excavation report of this tomb, it is, on the basis of the written record on the tombstone, identified the tomb of Fan Wenhui and his wife (Bai Guansi, 1957, p. 55). Fan



Fig. 4-10a



Fig. 4-10b

Wenhui was Chinese. He was the administrative manager to the Vice Commander-in-chief of the Palace of Anqing during the later years of the

Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). He surrendered to the Yuan conquerors in the 12th year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. 1275, the Yuan Dynasty (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 161) during the Mongol's military campaign to overthrow the Southern Song. Fan Wenhui then served the Yuan ruler, as a high ranking military official was recorded for a total of 57 times in the *History of the Yuan*, and was continuously involved in the military affairs of the Mongols. He was granted one of the highest governmental posts of Right Magistrate in Charge of Bureau of Military Affairs in the Department of State Affairs by the Yuan emperor in the 20th year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. 1283, the Yuan Dynasty. The Magistrate of the Bureau of Military Affairs was the first ranking military official in the Yuan court, responsible with other officials for all military business (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2155). Fan

Wenhu was later sent by the Yuan emperor to conquer Japan (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 224). The last record of Fan Wenhu in the *History of the Yuan* was that in 1282 he selected a good strong boat, abandoned thousands of his soldiers and escaped from the military campaign in Japan (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4629).¹³ He died in the 5th year of the reign-period Dade, i.e. 1301, the Yuan Dynasty, according to the information engraved on his tombstone (Bai Guansi, 1957, p. 55).

The tiger *ya* (Fig. 4-10) is a translucent jade, pale greenish in tone with brown markings. On top of the *ya* there is a recumbent tiger in fairly realistic style. Its eyes, nose and mouth are all simply incised. Nevertheless, the face has quite vivid expression. Its hind legs are tucked beneath its body, and its front legs are stretching forward with the two paws together. Its tail is curled up onto its back. The tiger looks as if it is about to pounce on its prey. On the base of the *ya*, there are only three strokes: a large horizontal one in a shape of a slug. Beneath it lie two smaller strokes, one slightly bigger than the another, each having the appearance of water drops randomly placed under the shelter of the largest horizontal stroke.

This jade *ya* demonstrates some interesting features. First, it does not show the imperial symbol of the dragon. This means that it was not for the use of emperor. It certainly did not have the function of the previous jade dragon seals assigned to the State or imperial Preceptor, or the emperor's teacher. Secondly, Fan Wenhu, who was the former commissioner's son-in-law and used to be a high military official in the Southern Song Dynasty, could certainly read and write perfectly. He could have been granted the jade *ya* to praise him for pledging allegiance to the Mongols, (rather than as an aid with illiteracy). Finally, the granted jade *ya* has a tiger instead of a dragon as its knob. This suggests that the tiger *ya* was more a personal symbol than an imperial award.

¹³ The year that Fan Wenhu escaped from the military campaign against Japan was recorded as 1281 in "The Military History of the Yuan Dynasty" (Wu Xiuyong, et al, 1995, p. 164).

The last character in Fan Wenhū's name 虎 means "tiger" (pronounced *hu* in Chinese). Although this may have been a nice homophonic coincidence, it is in the nature of such coincidences that they have been employed in art and literature throughout Chinese history (Yin Zhiqiang, 1998, p. 75). The tiger was believed to have the ability to ward off every kind of bad luck and every form of calamity (Ball, Katherine M., 1969, p. 18). The Mongols were no exception to this belief, and routinely awarding tiger amulets to the military officials of the emperor to encourage them carry out their military activities fearlessly (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4625). It is said to have a defensive effect against evil (Morant, 1890, p. 123). Fan Wenhū happened to have a name with the character for tiger embedded in it to help inspire and encourage him. A jade *ya* of tiger conferred to him by the Mongol emperor would have been a perfect way to remind him his duty and loyalty, and encourage him to fight for the Yuan ruler without fear. This jade also shows that the Yuan ruler did accept the concept of Chinese jade application and bestowed jade seals on Chinese provided they played according to Yuan rules.

Jade *ya*, like many other jade artefacts, was continued together with its tradition into the Ming and Qing dynasties. However, its function and the extent of its use became much more flexible than they were during the Yuan Dynasty (Deng Shuping, 1984, p. 86). For example, the excavation of the



Fig. 4-11

tomb of Zhutan, the tenth son of the first Ming emperor Hongwu (r.1368-1398) in Shangdong Province, uncovered four seals of which one was a jade *ya* (Fig. 4-11) (Shangdong Museum, 1972, p. 30). Together with other three stone seals, this jade *ya* was in a stone box engraved with three characters: 图书室 (Library). The role of this *ya* was to stamp the collection of books belonging to Zhutan in his library. Recorded in the *History of the Ming*, Zhutan was a gentleman of good literature, poets and songs (Zhang Tingyu et al, 1739, p. 3575). His jade *ya*, a facility originally to help

the illiterate in the previous Dynasty and now a stamp to assist the intellectual to make artistic marks as book-plates.

4.2 JADE ANIMALS IN ARCHAIC STYLE

Jades in archaic style or imitating ancient ritual objects started as a fashion in the Song Dynasty, when the Chinese began properly to re-evaluate their material culture (Yang Boda, 1984, p. 70). They stressed the importance of the past as a source of general values to be exploited in the political and social life of the present (Rawson, 1995, p. 89). Ancient objects or copies of them were, in the motif of the dragon - superpower, therefore, to be highly treasured and used in the present as ancient pieces, or contemporary pieces with ancient associations. However, the artefacts of imperial collections had been largely ruined by the preceding wars. Ancient jades, along with ancient bronzes, were then in great demand as antiques and relics, and the industry of making archaistic objects with antiquity quality started to flourish (Gu Fang, 1996, p. 211).

4.2.1 Jades of Ancient Association

Both jade carving and the connoisseurs and collectors of Chinese jade suffered from Mongol brutality. However, the trend in the Song Dynasty to carve to imitation of ancient jades or copy ideas or styles from ancient bronzes did not die out during the Mongol period. On the contrary, it continued throughout the Yuan Dynasty to the early Ming Dynasty and, reached its peak in the Qing period (Deng Shuping, 1998, p. 41). To carve jade in imitation of ancient Chinese examples, like in paintings, was initially one of the major tasks for the Yuan court artisans (Li Yumin, 1986, p. 65; Zhang Shufen, 1991, p. 660). The forms and chief types produced by early bronze casters exercised considerable



Fig. 4-12

influence upon the art of jade. Many jade productions are almost identical in shape and decoration with those created by the earlier craftsmen in bronze (Nott, 1962, p. 41).

Characteristically, during the imitation of ancient jades to have fabricated such as the pattern of thundercloud or motif of animal figures in symmetrical arrangement, Yuan artisans inserted something which was totally alien to the ancient bronze. There doesn't seem to have been much intention to forge ancient jades, but merely to borrow some of motifs, shapes and types from ancient bronze or jades, in order to please and satisfy connoisseurs of antiquities. It can be found in the Yuan court that some so-called archaic jades have reflected echoes of the charms of ancient times, but there is no doubt about their more recent manufacture of ideas and designs of the Yuan period (see Fig. 4-12).

This jade is a greyish green in colour, and of oblate form with touch of greyish white. It holds a kind of dignified tone, which makes it perfect material in which to embed ancient ritual ideas from bronzes. This jade object is carved in a very sophisticated manner, with considerable ancient bronze flavour.

This jade utensil has a rectangular shaped mouth with four rounded corners. Two dragons are set in low relief on the two long sides of the neck of the vessel, on a brocade background. There are two dragon-headed handles with two rings on two short sides of the vessel. The belly (on the side facing the front) of the vessel is carved with four groups of key fret-pattern on a brocade ground. The base has arrow-shaped intaglio lines.

The dragon-headed handles with two loose rings on this jade jar is presented with drawings and discussed by Wu Dacheng, who reckoned that it was one of the styles of bronzes of the Zhou Dynasty (1000-771BC) (No. 20) (Wu Dacheng, 1889, p. 1293). The most striking and eye-catching layout is the jar's four large fret-pattern around its waist (facing the front). It certainly represents some characteristics of ritual

bronzes of the early Zhou Dynasty (No. 21). Both bronze *zun* and *hu* were used for wine mostly during sacrificial rites in the Zhou Dynasty (Ma Chengyuan, 1988, p. 210). There is no doubt that this jade vessel is an object of copied ideas and motifs from ancient ritual bronzes.

It is, however, noticeable that the dragon on the neck of this jade vessel (the side of the neck facing the front) is depicted as a thin-necked and fatter-tummied creature whose four legs each end in claws of three-digits. This presentation can be found in a piece of marble fence excavated from Yuan Dadu (No. 22). The dragon on the jade vessel has its mouth open with the tongue hanging out. Its upper lip is longer than the



Fig. 4-13a

lower one. The dragon has enormous mane, which is long and flowing undulating backwards. These characteristics are shared by another dragon of the Yuan period in No. 15. On the jade jar, the dragon's dorsal are given a sawtooth pattern, and its body is covered by net-like scale. Features of this kind can also be found in a pair of ceramic vases in the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, known as David Vases (No. 17) and a Yuan ceramic jar excavated from Jiangxi Province (No. 23).



Fig. 4-13b

Additional to the characteristics of the dragon on this jade jar, the square-shaped pattern, also called thunder-clouds motif and flora design on the brocade ground in fret-pattern around its waist can also be found in No. 22.

These distinctive features of the jade jar demonstrate a typical example of jade object with motifs of ancient bronzes, which were blended with a Yuan period style. In another words, it is a Mongol version composed of ancient forms of bronze in jade. Archaeological discoveries also show evidence of this new approach. The jade jar (Fig. 4-12) is not an isolated case in imitation of

ancient objects. Fig. 4-13 is another fine jade object in the shape of a vessel call *hu* showing some ancient bronze taste.

This jade *hu* is a translucent white jade bottle of ellipse shape with a touch of pale mellow tone. It has two tubular-shaped handles on its two shoulders. Its lid once had a flower set in high relief on its top, as a knob which is said to be missing (Details see the note attached to Fig. 4-13) and a dragon-shaped animal carved in lithophane. Between its mouth and belly, there are four of bowstring designs. This jade is treated with simple lines and pattern. Its well-polished surface presents almost perfect characteristics of mutton-fat jade, a mild feel, moist appearances and a luxurious form.

This jade vessel, together with the jade tiger *ya* was uncovered in the tomb of the military official Fan Wenhui and his wife, on Qui Panshan Mountain, in Anqing City, Anhui Province, in 1956 (Bai Guansi, 1957, p. 55). Though it was not part of the Yuan court products, everything about it, such as its exquisite quality and fine craftsmanship, speak loudly of its superior attribution. It resembles some distinctive characteristics of ancient bronze *hu*, which demonstrates a bronze *hu* of early Zhou Dynasty. It has a lid with a simple knob. No.24 presents a bronze *hu* of later Shang Dynasty. It has two tubular-shaped handles on its shoulders without lid. They both are in a shape of some sort of gourd - small mouth and big belly. The jade *hu* shares strong taste and idea of the two bronzes.

However, the missing flower on the lid of this jade *hu* (Fig. 4-13b). is something totally unknown to ancient bronzes (Yang Boda, 1993a, p. 18). The flora motif in realistic style during the Yuan Dynasty was quite a common expression in art. The original jade *hu* (Fig. 4-13b) with its flower-knobbed lid strongly suggested its “alien” identity compared with styles of ancient bronzes. The jade flora lid was described as “drawing a snake with feet”. It means ruining the effect by adding something superfluous (Yang Boda, 1993a, p. 18). Or does it?

The maker of this jade *hu* may have not had any intention to imitate ancient bronzes proper. Instead of having to rely on real ancient bronzes as a source for copying, artisans would have used a more readily available medium, such as woodblock illustrations, which might have been inaccurate. What seems to have mattered was not the original material, precise form or function of the ancient piece, but simply its general association with the past and with the supposed virtues of the past (Rawson, 1995, p. 90). The jade *hu*, in this case has just copied some characteristics of the bronze, such as its fat-bellied shape with two tubular handles. The artisan then continued with his own imagination and talents to complete the rest of the jade object.

Laufer commented that a Chinese copy is designed to be a creative reinvention, not purely a direct copy. It is partaking to blend the spirit into the soul (Laufer, 1912, p. 326). His summery has indeed got some grasp of one of the keys in Chinese art.

4.3 THE GREAT JADE URN



Fig. 4-14

The most striking and representative jade object, as well as the biggest imperial jade container ever made in China is the *dushan dayu hai* 渎山大玉海 (Great Jade Urn of Dushan) (Fig. 4-14). Its size, magnificent appearance, superior quality and

extraordinary history are all part of the attributes to Mongol taste and style in court jade craftsmanship. Although there hasn't been any mineralogical analysis done on the Great Jade Urn (Yang Boda, 1999, Interview), it is already commonly accepted as jade (in the broad sense), and as having been worked as such (Watt, 1980, p. 22).

The Great Jade Urn of Dushan was made in the second year of the reign-period Zhiyuan, i.e. 1265, the Yuan Dynasty (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 109). It is in very

dark colour, and is recorded in various places as grey-white jade (Yang Boda, 1996, p. 77), or as jade of green, black and white (Qiu Fuhai, 1994, p. 247), or simply “black jade” (Watt, 1980, p. 21). On close inspection, the Great Jade Urn turns out to be very dark black-ish green with some patches of white. Around the urn’s body, carved in low relief, there are thirteen animals: dragon, *chi* dragons (two), horse, sheep-headed animal, pig, horned-headed animal (two), rabbit-headed animal, deer-headed creature, conch (two), fish (see Catalogue of Jade). They all have scales like that of fish. The mammals have wings. All are racing around in the billowing waves of the rolling sea. The waves depicted on this big jade urn are rendered in a very dramatic fashion, to show the turbulence of the sea and its tempestuous waters.

The Great Jade Urn has an extraordinary biography, which explains a lot about its unique and important significance both in history and art.

The name of the Great Jade Urn of Dushan, in Chinese, *du shan da yu hai* 渎山大玉海 has something very interesting to tell. *du shan* 渎山 means “Du Mountain”, which in history has another name called *min shan* 珉山 (Min Mountain), in Sichuan Province (Ciyuan, 1992, p. 1899). The word *min* 珉 means “beautiful stone like jade in three colours” (Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 34). Min Mountain, therefore, is a mountain, which produces colourful jades. This has told us that Du Mountain 渎山 (or Min Mountain 珉山) in Sichuan Province was the birthplace of the Great Jade Urn. That is the reason why the material of the Great Jade Urn is called *shu yu* 蜀玉 (*shu* jade) by the Qianlong Emperor (r.1736-1795) of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) (Hong Li, Qing Dynasty, poems on the pillars around the Great Jade Urn in Beihai Park), because *shu* 蜀 is the short term for Sichuan Province. The third and forth Chinese characters of the Great Jade Urn, *Da yu* 大玉 mean “big (or large) jade”. The last character *hai* 海 can either mean “big container” or “sea” (Ciyuan, 1992, p. 1803). This duality of meaning neatly alludes to the urn’s function and its huge size in the motif of the sea.

The Great Jade Urn of Dushan measures 70cm in height, 135cm-182cm in diameter, 55cm inside depth, and 494cm in circumference and its total weight is 3500 kilograms. It would take some 660 gallons of wine just about to fill it. From any point of view, this big jade urn is to be regarded as one of the wonders of the Mongol court in Beijing, even on account of its size alone, being the largest ever Yuan jade known to us. It has been estimated that if one craftsman worked 8 hours on this jade, it would have taken him 60 years to finish it, even if a dozen jade carvers all worked together on it, it would have taken them at least 5 years to complete this job (Gu Fang, 1996, p. 195).

Historically, it was very possible that the jade urn's acquisition coincided during the time of Mongol's military campaign to wipe out the Southern Song Dynasty. In the course of the forty-year long war to defeat the Southern Song, the Mongols, in addition to their preoccupation with killing and looting, saw and came to appreciate more of Chinese jade culture in southern China. When found this huge semi-precious stone, the Mongols obtained it and worked on it, in conception of and execution under the Mongol administration.

Hansford, world-wide well known Chinese jade expert, commented on the Great Jade Urn that "the material of the wine bowl does differ in certain respects from the usual run of Khotan nephrite" (Hansford, 1965, p. 164), indicating though seemingly without great certainty, that the material of this jade urn was not nephrite of Khotan type. It would not be difficult to confirm his hypothesis, largely because the material of the jade urn was not from Khotan but from Sichuan Province. Geographically, Sichuan Province has long been one of the soft jades producing regions (Luan Binao, 1989, p. 113). Jade carving history there can be traced long back to the Neolithic times (Dong Zhenxin, 1995.p368). In recent research, *Longxi Jade*, one of the *shu* jades (Sichuan jade) has been identified a "soft jade" of tremolite grown from amphibolized dolomite marble, a type of metamorphosed limestone rich in magnesium (Tang Yianling, et al, 1994, p. 174). Though *Longxi Jade* is normally yellowish or light green, some very dark green almost to black with speckles of light

marks are not unknown. It is also understood that *Longxi* Jade does not have an appearance of moist look, like jades from Khotan, but could achieve a kind of gloomy oily look once polished. These characteristics of *Longxi* Jade seem to match quite well the physical qualities of the Great Jade Urn. Therefore, it is possible to say that the Great Jade Urn could have been made of *Longxi* Jade, one of *shu* jades, until a thorough mineralogical survey is conducted.

After this large piece of jade was obtained, the Mongols were said to have transported it from Sichuan Province via Shaanxi Province to the mid-China grasslands (today's Inner Mongolia), and eventually it arrived to Helin, present-day Ulan Bator (capital of the People's Republic of Mongolia) (Yang Boda, 1991, p. 132). Mongols already had institutional abilities at that time to administrate and supervise their artisans such as jade carvers, gold smith and other court supplies (Chapter Two), especially when the Department of Helin Craftsman was established under the Mongol government in 1261 in Helin (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2226).

Another theory argues that the raw material of this jade urn was shipped out of Sichuan Province via Yangtze River and, transported by land to Beijing, in where it was carved by the Jin craftsmen (Fang Gu, 1996, p. 195). Zhou Nanquan agrees that it was very likely that the Great Jade Urn was made in Beijing which was effectively under the Mongol's control even before the establishment of the Capital of the Yuan Dynasty (Zhou Nanquan, 1980, p. 25). It would have been too troublesome to transport this huge jade material to the far away Helin, today's Ulan Bator, carved it there and then transport it again from Ulan Bator to Beijing.

These hypothesis all have their strong points but all would need more historical evidence to support them which is lacking. Interestingly, one thing, which does not, seems to trigger any argument is that it is unlikely that the completion of the jade urn was carved in Sichuan. This is probably because it goes without saying that the Southern China was at that time a battleground during the Mongol military campaign.

If the estimation of 5-years working consumption of the Great Jade Urn is reasonable (Gu Fang, 1996, p. 195), it had to be worked on not later than 1261, regardless of the time it took to transport. This is because the jade urn was recorded as being in Beijing by 1265 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 109). However, when the jade material first arrived to be carved is not the major argument of this thesis. What matters most is what is presented on the stone and its insight to the Mongols.

The Great Jade Urn is reckoned a collective wisdom of artisans of many nationalities (Zhou Nanguan, 1980, p. 25). It is reasonable to assume this when the entire history of art under the Mongols is described as “an artistic hunter’s stew - rich, gamy, endlessly heterogeneous” (Lee, et al, 1968, p. 1). There were lots of craftsmen arrested from the Liao and Jin dynasties by the Mongols, and artisans from China, Persia, Xixia, Chinese Turkestan, Persian and Khitan (Amurbarto, 1997, p. 236). They could all have been involved in making the urn. During years of Mongol military campaigns, craftsmen and artisans of all nationalities were not killed but arrested or even employed to work for the Mongols (Xu Wenqin, 1992, p. 98). They were ordered to work together with their skills in different styles and inevitably contributed a great deal to the designs of Mongol artefacts.

The Great Jade Urn was finally completed and positioned in the Guanghang Hall in Beihai Park, and used to contain wines (Gu Fang, 1996, p. 194). The Yuan emperor Khubilai used it to entertain his guests in the Guanghang Hall after he set up the Yuan capital in Beijing in 1272 (Shi Weimin, 1996, p. 144). Wine was served from the Great Jade Urn.

There is a trivial but interesting incidence about the usage of this jade urn, apparently because of some language confusions. The Great Jade Urn is often called *yu gang* in spoken Chinese, instead of its given name *yu hai* which is used almost only in literature. *Yu* with the falling tone means “jade”, and *gang* in the first tone refers to “big container”. Interestingly, the Great Jade Urn is occasionally recorded as a fish

bowl (Bushell, 1914, p. 133). This is obviously not correct according to historical archives. However, the mistake of having wrongly named the Great Jade Urn is somehow not totally unexpected. When the characters fish bowl and used in romanization, it is exactly the same as the jade urn - *yu gang*, without differentiating their tones¹⁴. When the *yu* is not given any indication of its tone, it could mean several things including the meaning of fish, which is in a rising tone. This mistake would not easily accrue when both “jade urn” and “fish bowl” are written in Chinese characters: 玉缸 (jade urn) and 鱼缸 (fish bowl). The first character of each of term looks entirely different, of course. It would otherwise be very confusing when they are only in romanization without being toned, even to Chinese.

The Great Jade Urn was put in the Guanghang Hall, Beijing, and remained there for the next 400 years. Even during the change in dynasty in 1368 when the Chinese overthrew the Mongols, the Great Jade Urn seemed to have been undisturbed (Fang Gu, 1996, p. 195). However, during the 1640's when the Manchu were overwhelming the Ming Dynasty, the jade urn was displaced. Guanghang Hall was set on fire during the fighting and was burnt down the Great Jade Urn. As consequence, Guanghang Hall collapsed and the big jade urn went missing! (Notes on the Great Jade Urn, Beihai Park, Beijing). Its whereabouts were unknown to the court for the next 96 years, during which time the Great Jade Urn was served as a convenient pickle-container for the monks in the Temple of Zhenwu, situated not very far away from the Forbidden City, by its West Gate (Yang Boda, 1996, p. 78). It is not hard to imagine how exceedingly shabby the Great Jade Urn must have looked after almost a century's neglect and misuse. It was in 1745, the 10th year of the reign-period Qianlong Emperor Hongli, Qing Dynasty that the Great Jade Urn was found.

¹⁴ Chinese is a tone language. Since there are only about 400 basic monosyllables which can be combined to make words in Chinese, the use of tones is one way of substantially increasing the number of available monosyllables. Every syllable in isolation has its definite tone, which determines its specific meaning (s). Syllables with different tones mean different things although they may share

It was by order of the Emperor himself, who had a great passion for jade, that the jade urn was “called in”, with one thousand taels (*liang*) of gold given in compensation to the monks. It is then detailed in the imperial records, in the *History of the Qing*, that the Great Jade Urn was washed and thoroughly scraped in 1746. The auspicious sea-animals on it were also twice re-carved in 1748 in the court workshop under the supervision of an official named Wang. In 1749, the jade urn was re-located with the marble pagoda in front of Chengguang Hall in the Round Fort, Beihai Park, Beijing (Note in front of the Great Jade Urn in the Round Fort, Baihai Park, Beijing). In 1753, under Qianlong Emperor’s order, it was again recarved for the last time and polished by the artisans Li Jinxiao and Li. They “improved” its appearance in accord with the Qing Emperor’s taste. The Great Jade Urn now rests upon a massive plinth of carved white marble, and the four columns supporting the roof of the pavilion are inscribed with eulogistic verses composed by 40 scholars specially selected by imperial command.

The long “curriculum vitae” of the Great Jade Urn with its various vicissitudes during the several hundred years since its “birth” help give a better understanding of its “multi-styled” jade carving. However, the original idea of animals in the sea was never changed, and their vigorous and powerful images still constitute a wonderful example of imperial jade from the Yuan court.

The sculptures on the Great Jade Urn are like a long hanging scroll of pictures. It is arranged with the traditional scenography that the animals and waves are proportionally scattered to “fill up” the whole “scroll”. The dragon, the most important creature of all, is in the centre of the scroll and the other “sea animals” are strewn in apparent random all around. All of them are in relief and depicted straightforward and uninhibited. Some turbulent whirlpool currents are carved in light-ish areas to successfully add up some vision effects of spindrifts. Rough waves are rendered in very dark areas so that they look more mysterious and almost vicious.

the same spelling in romanization. Therefore, it does cause confusions and misunderstandings when tones or actual characters are not provided (Kan Qian, 1995, p. 5).

This jade scroll of pictures presents the great momentum of an unrestrained and far-ranging world.



Fig. 4-15

The animals carved on the Great Jade Urn are mostly not those of the real world in any strict sense, except for the fish and conch, which don't seem to have much mythical nature in them. Both the dragon and *chi* dragons are depicted as lively of movement. They are arranged in the grandiose sky and the magnificent sea to fortify its glorious icon, and the symbol of

absolute power and authority represented by the emperor. Other animals have wings for flying. The horse, the most important animal in the life of the Mongols, stands out to occupy a major eye-catching position. It has long mane in a few locks, and a hardy body. There are two wings on each side of its body which is decorated with scales. These scales indicate its ability to live in the water. Its posture seems to show it about to jump out of the roaring waves, gallop across the sea, and fly vigorously far away. The motif of the horse with scales, implying some sort of aquatic nature is also seen in other Mongolian sculptures (No. 25). In recent archaeological discoveries, there is a horse sculpture from the tomb of Yeluzhu, high official of the Yuan court and his wives (No. 26) (Jiang Dong, 1998, p. 6). It is a horse carved on marble, along with other burial objects. Underneath the marble horse, it is depicted with some clouds and waves. This marble horse presents some typical characteristics of the motif of horse in waves. There is another horse carved in jade in the collection of Victoria and Albert Museum, there is a jade horse running in waves (Fig. 4-15) dated to the Ming Dynasty. The fashion of its depiction shares some distinctive similarities with the horse on the Great Jade Urn, which was a few times recarved during the Ming Dynasty.

Besides the conch and fish in realistic style, the wild boar on the jade urn, is another most "realistic" animals regardless of its scales and flame-shaped wings. It has tusks, very long and hard bristles. Its extraordinary wings can be found similar type in No.

27, which was uncovered from the ruins of the Yuan Dadu. Other animals don't seem to have realistic nature though they share some features of the real wildlife. The sheep-headed animal has some goat beard. The rabbit-headed animal has a heavy mane like horse's with its body merged in waves. Similar to the boar, there is a tusk-headed animal, with a gill-shaped organ and scaled body. The rabbit-headed animal and deer-headed creature named by Yang Boda (Yang Boda, 1991, p. 132) could also be called pointing-faced animals because their only rabbit and deer features are pointing out faces. The horned-headed animal has its single horn on its forehead, slightly bending forward. The creature has some gills and a ox-shaped mouth. These mythical animals bespeak the Mongols' mental attitude, inviting fabulous animals as symbols of conquest and victory. It is also commend that the Mongols were at that time a strongly superstitious people, and that is why they enjoyed depicting mythical animals of their imagined super powers, rather than animals of the natural world (McElney, 1998, p. 2). It is not difficult to discover in Mongol art the desire to obtain supernatural power by means of fantastic creatures.

The animals on the jade urn look so forcefully vigorous and lifelike, mostly due to the surging of the sea. The use of waves is very common in their art. It started long before the Yuan Dynasty and has persisted in present time (James, 1980, p. 22). The beauty, mystery and power of the waves always attracted artists throughout the history. René Grousset argues that Chingis Khan's offspring worshipped water in calm rivulets or turbulent sea from generation to generation (Grousset, 1970, p. 120). But the insight of the waves to the Mongols seemed to bring the fascination into light from other aspects. As nomads, the Yuan rulers were not automatically adaptable to the sea. The phenomenon of the Mongols' great conundrum and nightmare of the sea and how much they were intrigued by it was enormous. Waves in the dark and unpredictable sea were to them as some mysterious supernatural power that could not be withstood (Qiu Fuhai, 1994, p. 248). Mythical animals carved on a huge dark jade as the sea with billowy waves have expressed the Mongols' horror of the sea, and also probably of their hopes of conquering it.

As far as the jade carving, polishing and the treatment of small details are concerned, it is not so straightforward to examine the Yuan style on this urn, due to it having been repeatedly “cleaned and repaired” in the Qing Dynasty. In fact, this jade urn could be regarded as one of the good examples of Qing fashion in jade craftsmanship. The peak period of Qing jade carving was during the Qianlong time (1736-1795) (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 248). This was when the Great Jade Urn was “polished” over and over again. Some striking characteristics of jade carving from the Qing period are well demonstrated on this jade urn. It now displays a great deal of streamlined lines, continuity without any sharp turns or odd gaps and extremely high quality polishing. Compared with this, Yuan jade carving is rather unconstrained and bold, sometimes not finely polished and the details are not necessarily carved to a delicate degree. This topic will be more expanded in the later chapters. Nevertheless, the Great Jade Urn of Dushan is still regarded as the most famous and best-documented piece of Yuan jade to have survived to the present day. The Mongol’s idea of representing animals in this layout on this particular jade material, and to have made it into a wine container, is entirely Mongol in concept.

4.4 SUMMARY

The most important use of best quality jade was to make the Imperial seals for the Emperor. There are 10 jade seals collected in this thesis, among which 8 jade seals were dragon seals. They all are the Imperial seals granted by the Yuan Emperors to eminent Tibetan monks as the State or Imperial Preceptors. The dragon seal Fig. 4-6 is made of mutton-fat Khotan jade with an exceptionally top attribute. Its moist appearance and luster radiated from within its semitranslucent body, which demonstrates every quality of its superlative and imperial status. Except one jade dragon seal from the Victoria and Albert Museum Collection (Fig. 4-7) and another jade tiger seal excavated from the tomb of Fan Wenhu (Fig. 4-10), all jade dragon seals

are all well recorded in the *History of the Yuan* as well as other historical archives or Official documents about each of its occasion when it was issued.¹⁵ Moreover, they have been kept in Tibet ever since they were granted by the Mongols Emperors.

Although it is not possible to know exactly how many and to whom the jade dragon seals were issued in the Yuan court when not precisely archived in the *History of the Yuan*, it is evident that there were far more jade dragon seals made and used in the Yuan court when there are 121 entries of jade seals recorded in this official historical annual. There is a clear indication to differentiate an Imperial jade seal and an ordinary seal recorded in the *History of the Yuan* because these two terms are in different Chinese characters as xi 玺 (Imperial jade seal) and yin 印 (ordinary seal). Although it is not recorded whether the Imperial jade seals all had dragon knobs, it would not be unreasonable to presume that the Imperial jade seals for the Yuan Emperors were indeed the dragon-knobbed, since the dragon was the exclusive symbol of the absolute power and supremacy of the Mongol Emperors (Amurbarto, 1997, p. 79). However, 7 Imperial jade dragon seals in this thesis, though a small number compared with 121 Imperial jade seals recorded in the *History of the Yuan*, have evidently demonstrated one of the first and most important use of jade for the Mongol Emperors.¹⁶

¹⁵ The jade dragon seal Fig. 4-6 itself is now kept by its collector Chen Jun in Britain. It has been officially examined by Yang Boda, former director the Palace Museum in Beijing who identified it as the Imperial seal in the Yuan court (Yang Boda, 1998, Interview). The State Department of Relics and Culture and the Cultural Section of the Chinese Embassy were also involved in the seal's examination and approval of its identification. There is an official report of this seal's identification which is said to have been kept by Mr. Chen Jun, its collector. For the security reason, it is not possible to see this jade dragon seal and its identification certificate (Chinese Embassy, 1998, Interview).

¹⁶ The symbol of the dragon, though strictly defined only for the emperors during the Yuan Dynasty, was perhaps occasionally and quietly used by commoners. Li Yuyan, a teacher of the Yuan period, was found and reported to have worn 6 long gowns in his tomb (Shangdong Relics Stores, 1978, p. 14). The very top gown was a short-sleeved silk one, and the gown underneath it was a dark-coloured and long-sleeved gown with a dragon woven on it! This case is used to argue that commoners, including Chinese ones during the Yuan time, did wear the dragon image (Xu Naixian, et al, 1987, p. 45). If this

The Yuan rulers favoured the Imperial jade seal as the symbol of the power and sovereignty in the Court, but they could not exercise it properly because of their illiterate status. Therefore the most distinctive sign of “Mongolized” imperial seal of the time was either with Phags-pa language seal cutting, or ya 押, meaningless but unique symbols of seal writings presented in Fig. 4-9, Fig. 4-10 and Fig. 4-11 of that specific period of time.

However, the most famous jade household ornament of the Yuan period was the Great Jade Urn, a functional jade object of wine container and furnishment in the Yuan court. It is indeed a very striking decoration in the Palace. Its size and style impose its great momentum of its era of the time.

In much smaller size compared with the Great Jade Urn, some jade objects in the Yuan court, such as Fig. 4-12, are by no means less charming. It is an archaic jade jar of an ancient bronze ritual image, well reserved in the Imperial jade collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing.

Imperial jades used in the Yuan court or for high-ranking Yuan officials, due to lack of historical and archaeological evidence, don't remain in large quantity, relatively speaking. However, enough has been found to present some idea of taste and fashion of the Yuan court jade craftsmanship, which demonstrates great splendour and unique dynastic style of the imperial jades during the Yuan time.

Later chapters will present more jades and conduct detailed discussion on them when under the Mongols of the 13th-14th centuries. They will reveal more insight into the past that animals played in jade, and indeed, what those jades were used for and their cultural and political impact.

was true during the Yuan time as the dragon gown found in Li Yuyan's tomb, it must have been practised secretly or hiddenly only in a place like a tomb under the Mongol's sever sovereignty.

CHAPTER FIVE: INFLUENCE OF THE NOMADIC LIFE STYLE ON JADE CARVING

One of the most symbolic kinds of jade object of the Yuan Dynasty are those bearing the motif of hunting scenes in either the spring or the autumn. There are said to be altogether several hundreds of jades of this kind in the Imperial Collections in the Palace Museum, Beijing, and the National Palace Museum in Taiwan. Not many of them, however, have ever been published or exhibited to the world (Yang Boda, 1999, Interview). The typical subject of the hunting scene is a falcon attacking swans, or tigers chasing deer in a forest. The subjects are full of wild freshness and the beauty of Nature. In the Yuan court the favourite subject of hunting was depicted on a large number of belt-plaques hooks and costume ornaments, for the Mongol emperors and their nobles. There is evidence, however, to show that the hunting motif on jades was not a Mongol invention. It was a cultural heirloom of other Northern nomads, such as those in the Jin and Liao Dynasties, to the Mongols, who later enhanced the hunting motif in their flourishing jade manufacture (Yang Boda, 1992, p. 90).

5.1 THE SEASONAL HUNTING OF THE NORTHERN NOMADS

During the Liao Dynasty, the nomadic tribes in northern China called the Khitan were hunters and shepherds. Their main activities were hunting and moving their homes and their animals, such as horses and sheep to new locations of fresh grass and water (Grousset, 1970, p. 251). Wherever they found water and grass, or decided to hunt, they set up camps and settled temporarily. This activity of hunting and constructing temporary campsites was called *nai bo* 捺钵 in the Khitan language meaning *di fang* 地方 (place) in Chinese (Zhang Guangwen, 1992, p. 111). The *nai bo* normally occurred once in each of the four seasons every year (Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 375). In the Liao court, the tradition of *nai bo* became not only a way of hunting for food, or the process of taking animals to fresh grass and water, but also

an important period of recreation for the royalty and their nobles. Most of the recorded hunting activities of the period were those called *Chun nai bo* 春捺钵 (spring place) and *Qiu nai bo* 秋捺钵 (autumn place) (Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 373).

In 1115, the Jurchen, a smaller nomadic tribe overthrew the Liao Dynasty of the Khitans, and established the Jin Empire in the North of China. As a nomadic nation, the Jurchens were also very active in the matter of hunting. The hunting seasons and methods they used were not very much different from those of the Khitan tribe (Zhang Guangwen, 1992, p. 111). The tradition of the spring and autumn hunts was carried on.

In 1234, the Mongols conquered Bianjing, the capital of the Jin Dynasty, and in 1271 declared the establishment of their new dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty (Grousset, 1970, p. 330). The change of rulers did not seem to alter their nomadic life-style. The Mongols still hunted regularly and moved around like other nomadic peoples. Their hunting activities were, however, much larger in scale and more magnificent than those of the Liao and Jin nomads (Chen Xizhong, 1995, p. 57). The Mongol emperors organised hundreds of thousands of soldiers, and sometimes even allowed commoners to join the hunt for animals, for fun, food and for military training. There is a painting of the Yuan period to show the Mongol Emperor's hunting scene (No. 97). The Yuan Emperor Khubilai maintained a "menagerie" or "zoological" collection of 5,000 animals that included leopards, lions, lynxes, wolves and even elephants. He also kept a variety of birds of prey, used, as well as the dogs, for hunting (Polo, 13th century, pp. 139 & 142).¹ Additionally, the Mongols kept in cages

¹ Marco Polo (1254-1324), *The Travels of Marco Polo*. Marco Polo was born in 1254, the son of Niccoló Polo a Venetian merchant. Marco joined his father and uncle for their journey to China in 1271. They spent the next 20 years travelling in the service of Khubilai Khan. His book recorded what he'd seen while visiting China during the Yuan Dynasty. The Polos returned home to Venice by a long route in 1292, and in 1298-99 Marco was a prisoner of war in Genoa. It was probably in prison that he met Rustichello of Pisa, a romance-writer. Together they wrote *The Travels*; a product of an observant merchant and a professional romancer. Marco Polo died in 1324 and left the bulk of his possessions accrued on his travels to be divided between his three daughters. There are some confusing and debatable parts in this book, not to mention possible missing bits, and it doesn't provide a precise publishing date or authorship. There are already nine translations. The latest, and the one I use, is by Ronald Latham, former lecturer in Latin in Queen's University, Belfast, and an assistant keeper of the

fierce animals caught during the hunting seasons. These animals were deliberately kept hungry, and were released to attack enemies during the Mongols' various battles against the Song Dynasty (Chen Xizhong, 1995, p. 57). Present-day Nanyuan, a northern part of Beijing, was one of the well-known hunting grounds of the Yuan period, built by the Yuan Emperor Khubilai near the Yuan capital Dadu for the hunting entertainment of the Yuan court (Yu Minzhong, 1774, p. 1231).

Birds of prey were the main creatures used for the spring hunting by the Yuan court. There are detailed records in *History of the Yuan*, of as many as 41,564 households, practically in army units, which caught and trained the birds of prey for the Yuan emperors (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 2599-2601). They were officially registered and recorded by the Yuan court, as catchers and trainers of falcons, eagles and hawks. The chief manager in the Yuan court of these units was the second highest-ranking officer (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 752). His rank demonstrates how important the training of hunting-birds was considered at that time.

The pleasure of hunting was an integral part of the tradition of nomadic life, and was inevitably reflected in the art of the Liao and Jin dynasties. Artistic renderings of hunting scenes evolved into two groups of distinct motifs: birds of prey attacking geese or swans on ponds of lotus and water-plants were the symbols of the spring hunt; and tigers, deer and bears in a forest, became the typical images of the autumn hunt. Other birds, such as eagles, larks or magpies, were sometimes employed as well. Mythical animals are not unknown, but were restricted to the autumn hunt scene. Taken together, the animals show both the very distinctive life style and the living natural environment of the northern nomads. The motifs of the hunting scenes were handed down to the Mongols, and were an addition to their own artistic repertoire during the Yuan Dynasty (Clunas, 1997, p. 63).

5.1.1 The Symbol of the Spring Hunt

The spring hunt usually happened during *zhengyue* 正月 (Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 373), the first month of the year in the Chinese lunar calendar. Usually, *zhengyue* comes at the end of January or in mid-February. In *History of the Liao*, it records: 春錄鉢，曰鴨子河砮- “Spring *nai bo* means (in) the Duck River” (Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 373). The Liao emperor set up his “*nai bo*”, the place of the mobile hunting camps, near the Duck River, ready for the spring hunt. Geese, swans and other such migrant birds would not return from the south for another sixty days (Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 373). The hunt, therefore, began by catching fish in the Duck River. By the time the migrant birds came along, the emperor too had arrived. The hunting scene is recorded in detail:

鴨子河東西二十里，南北三十里……多榆柳杏林，皇帝每至，伺御皆服墨綠色衣，各各連錐一柄，鷹食一器，刺鵝錐一枚，于河周圍排立。皇帝冠巾衣時服，系玉束帶，于上風望之。有鵝之處舉旗，探旗馳報，遠泊鳴鼓。鵝驚騰起，……五坊擎海東青鵝，拜授皇帝放之。鵝擒鵝墜，勢力不佳，排立近者，舉錐刺鵝，取腦以鵝，救鵝人例賞銀絹，皇帝得頭鵝，…群臣各獻酒果，舉樂，…致賀語，皆插鵝毛于首以為樂，…春盡乃歸。(Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 374).²

Twenty *li* east to west, and thirty *li* north to South on the banks of Duck River, ... there are many elm, willow and apricot woods. When the emperor arrives, his attendants, all dressed in dark-green clothing, are ready each with a hammer attached to a chain, a container of food for eagles and a goose-piercing awl, and standing in line all around the river. The emperor, imperial cloth hat on his head, clad in proper clothing for the season, and wearing a belt (decorated) with jade plaques attached to it, watches from a position up-wind. When they find a place where there are geese, the attendants signal by raising flags, and flag-watchers gallop on horseback to report it, and from distant moorings drums are then played, and the geese, startled, soar up into the air, Officers of the Five Cages proffer Sea-east Green Falcons (*hai dong qing gu*) to the emperor, and respectfully allow the emperor to loose them. When the hawk catches a goose and plummets to the ground, without applying any force, the attendant standing in position nearest by lifts up his awl and

² Bird hunting, although a part of nomadic seasonal hunt, it was almost totally for amusement, rather than major food resources (Jagchid, et al, 1979, p. 37).

pierces the goose, taking out its brain to feed to the hawk. The attendants who retrieve geese are rewarded with silver and silk. The emperor receives the first goose killed. ... The officials each present him with wine and sweetmeats, and musical performances are presented. A congratulatory address is delivered, and all for their amusement, stick geese-feathers in their hair. ... When the spring is over, they return home.

5.1.1.1 *Birds of Prey and Preyed upon Birds*

The *hai dong qing gu* 海东青鹞 which was trained to attack swans or geese in the spring hunt during the Liao Dynasty, has been identified as the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) (Du Yaquan, et al, 1932, p. 2477). Its plumage is slaty grey, black and brown. The bird is described as “bullet-headed, broad in the shoulder and tapering to the tail (Peterson, et al, 1963, p. 63). It is a powerful predator, a perfectly streamlined bird whose pointed wings enable it to make a power-dive estimated to reach 175 miles an hour. It is also well equipped to pursue other birds. Its name, *Falco peregrinus*, is Latin for “traveller with sickle or reaping hook” (Smith, et al, 1933, p. 263. & p. 524), which gives a vivid image of the speed with which this bird of prey swiftly catches its victim.

More specifically, the *hai dong qing gu* seems to have been a particular kind of Peregrine Falcon, which was said to be the type which performed best following training. *Hai* here means “sea”, *dong* means “east” and *qing* means “dark”.³ As for “*gu*” meaning “hawk”, Ye Ziqi, a Ming scholar notes: “Good at catching swans. It flies like a tornado, dashing up into the sky” (Ye Ziqi, 1516, p. 85). The *hai dong qing gu* is, therefore, the “dark-coloured hawk of east of the sea”. *Hai-dong* was also used as a term for the general area of Korea and Eastern Manchuria (Tetsushi, 1960, p. 1177). It is described in Japanese writings as: “Bird, like a falcon, flying from Gaoli (present-day Korea) across the sea, called *hai dong qing*” (Tetsushi, 1960, p.

³ The word *qing* 青 in Chinese writings has a reputation for causing confusion. It can mean blue or green or indeed any dark colour, ranging from white-ish blue to complete black. As far as this specific peregrine falcon is concerned, it is likely that the colour was blackish grey or brown since that is the major colour of this bird (King, et al, 1975, p. 98).

6888). The champion falcons trained for hunting seemed often to have been those from the eastern coastal regions of China, Korea and Japan (*Ciyuan*, 1992, p. 1806).

The *hai dong qing* was such an effective hunter that the Liao emperor became possessive about it. It was designated a royal bird and, by law, commoners were forbidden to own or raise the *hai dong qing*, either as a pet or for hunting (Ke Dake, 1995, p. 160). It is recorded that the Liao Dynasty made frequent and passionate demands for more *hai dong qing* from the small tribes which comprised the Jurchens of the Jin Empire on the east coast (Tuotuo, et al, 1345a, p. 9625; Peng Sunyi, et al, Ming Dynasty, p. 4). The Jin Empire lay between the Khitan of the Liao and Korea, to the east. The Khitans were therefore in a position to put tremendous pressure on the Jurchens to provide handsome tribute in the form of *hai dong qing* from the east coast. When the demand exceeded the supply of the birds, the Khitans decided to obtain them by using force against the Jurchens. The Jurchen fought back (Tuotuo, 1345b, p. 9625). Thus, in the process, they eventually defeated the Khitans, thereby establishing their own empire called the Jin Dynasty in the lands of the north of present-day China (Tsugio Mikami, 1972, p. 23).

The “ownership” of the *hai dong qing* changed again when the Jin Dynasty was overthrown by the Mongols (Feng Mingzhu, 1984, p. 88). The Mongols then enthusiastically tried to obtain as many *hai dong qing* as they could. It is recorded in *History of the Yuan*:

有俊禽曰海东青，由海外飞来，土人罗之，以为土贡。(Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1400).

There is a splendid bird called *hai dong qing*, which comes flying from beyond the sea, and the native people net it, and use it as local-product tribute to the emperor.

Criminals of the period could be pardoned if they paid tribute in the form of *hai dong qing* (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p.2599), which may explain why many people who had been criminals or been exiled took up the catching and training of the *hai dong qing* as a career. They were totally or partially exempted from taxes and other debts as

long as they continued to provide the *hai dong qing* as tribute to the Yuan court (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2599).

The bird of prey portrayed in the Chinese art of the time is sometimes described in English literature as the hawk (Forsyth, et al, 1994, p. 325). In China, although there are 56 species of birds of prey known and recorded, many of them have lived in the south, or were never trained to hunt (Zhao Ji, et al, 1990, p. 84). The sparrow-hawk (*Accipiter nisus*), Besra Sparrow-hawk (*Accipiter virgatus*) and goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), however, seem to have been likely candidates for training to hunt in the north. They all breed in the forest of the Northeast, and are found spread over the eastern coast of China. They all consume small mammals and fly fast enough to catch agile birds, such as swallows (*Hirundo ssp.*) and swifts (*Apus ssp.*). These birds of prey, therefore, could also have been employed for the imperial hunting activities in real life.

Falcons and hawks are not the totality of kinds of birds of prey recorded in the historical archives. During the Yuan Dynasty, an organ of the administration in the Yuan court was called the House of Hunting Eagles (*da bu ying fang* 打捕鷹房), the function of which was to “unleash eagles and falcons to attack” (*zong ying sun bu ji* 縱鷹隼搏击) (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2599). Taxonomically, the eagle and the hawk, are in the family of Accipitridae, although they belong to different genera (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, pp. 72-116). In Chinese, characters like *gu* 鵟 (falcon), *ying* 鷹 (eagle or hawk), *sun* 隼 (eagle or/and falcon), *yao* 鵞 (harrier), *ying diao* 鷹雕 (hawk eagle), *lie ying* 獵鷹 (hunting eagle) and *lie niao* 獵鳥 (hunting birds) have been used, often together or interchangeably, to refer to birds of prey in general. The writers of the Jin, Liao, Song and Yuan periods do not seem to have differentiated much between these terms. Modern taxonomies indicate that these terms refer to two families, the Accipitridae and Falconidae under the Order of Falconiformes (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, pp. 72-116). Most of the Chinese terms above appear often, singly or together, in *History of the Liao*, *History of the Jin*, *History of the Song* and *History of the Yuan*. All are used there with reference to imperial hunting. Spectacular imperial

hunting scenes, in which birds of prey were used, are reported from the 13th century by Marco Polo: "He [Khubilai Khan] is accompanied by fully 10,000 falconers and takes with him fully 5,000 gerfalcons and peregrine falcons and sakers in great abundance, besides a quantity of goshawks for hawking along the riversides." (Polo, 13th century, p.143). Later isolated sources argue that *hai dong qing* was the only bird of prey which could successfully attack swans when both birds were in the air (Yu Minzhong, 1774, p. 2415). Obviously, this statement is inaccurate, and seems to have been the result of admiration for, and exaggeration about, the *hai dong qing*, since the other birds of prey mentioned above also have the ability to attack in the air (King, 1975, pp. 94-99).

The kinds of birds which were hunted during the imperial hunt, are also named, in a loose and ambiguous fashion, in Chinese writings. They are referred to as: *yan* 雁 (goose, *Anser ssp.*), *hong yan* 鸿雁 (Chinese goose or swan goose, *Anser cygnoides*), *tian er* 天鹅 (swan, *Cygnus ssp.*), *hu* 鹄 (swan, *Cygnus ssp.*), *xue yan* 雪雁 (snow goose, *Anser caerulescens*) (Yu Minzhong, 1774, p. 2415; Yang Boda, 1993, Preface; Feng Mingzhu, 1984, p. 88; Zhang Guangwen, 1992, p. 111). These are all large birds with long necks, elegant bodies and splendid wings (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, pp. 39-45). These anatomical features are all to be found one way or another in the large birds depicted in the jades presenting spring hunt scenes. In any case, *tian er* 天鹅 (swan), when mentioned with reference to the spring hunt in *History of the Liao*, was clearly named as the bird to be hunted (Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 373). The literal translation of the bird's name is "celestial goose" or "goose in the sky". When, however, close observation is given to the jades using the motif of the spring hunt, it is seen that the large birds are represented more like a swan than any other bird, largely because of its long neck. Therefore, large birds with exceedingly long necks which are depicted in the jades to be discussed later in this chapter will be referred to as swans, unless otherwise specified.

The spring-hunt setting was of great importance to the court during the Yuan period, when the hunting tradition became a ritual and was widely depicted in art (Clunas,

1997, p. 63). Paper, textile and jade became common materials on or in which to depict this subject. A hanging scroll dated to the 13th-14th centuries presents the spring hunt with a falcon attacking a swan in a very realistic style (No. 2). The falcon flashes at speed towards the swan, which is desperately trying to break into some reeds. The swan has a long, elegant neck, and its mouth is wide open as if it is crying out. Its large wings are vividly depicted as flapping hard in an attempt to escape. The black bill of the swan with its lemon-yellow base strongly suggests that it is a Whistling Swan (*Cygnus columbiannus*), a species known to migrate to Northern China after the spring (No. 28) (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, p. 45). Physical characteristics of the falcon strongly resemble those of the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) (No. 29). Its pointed wings and the spot-patterned feathers on its back are consistent with its being of this species.

The spring hunt motif with its representations of falcon and swan, can be found in textiles of the same period. A splendid piece of textile has survived which shows a falcon swooping down on a swan in flight among floral and foliate branches (No. 3). The pattern is set against a green background, made up of teardrop units brocaded in gold. This piece of textile has been dated to the Jin Dynasty, on the grounds that it was discovered in the former Jin territory (Watt, et al, 1997, p. 112). The possibility, however, that this piece of textile may have been made during the Yuan era cannot be entirely ruled out. The Mongol Empire embraced all the former Jin territories, and the motif of the falcon attacking the swan continued. It was extensively employed during the Mongol period in paintings, textiles and jade carvings (Clunas, 1997, p. 63). As a matter of fact, this motif was rather the Mongol life style precisely recorded in the *The Secret History of the Mongols*, than some sort of heirloom from the Jin or Lian dynasties (*The Secret History of the Mongols*, 13th century, p. 6). It was indeed more enhanced during the Mongol period.

5.1.1.2 Spring Water Jades

The earliest known instance of the spring hunt scene's being term "the Spring Water" is in *History of the Liao*, in a context referring to the Liao emperors: "In February, we go up to the Spring Water" (Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 373). This refers to the Duck River in spring. The motif of the spring hunt appears again later, and is noted in *History of the Jin*:

近人常服有四：带，巾，盘领衣，乌皮鞋。其衣色多白，... 其胸臆肩袖，从春水之服则多鹄捕鹅，杂花卉之饰，.....(Tuotuo, et al, 1345c, p. 984).

The common clothes of the Jurchens consisted of four items: belt, head-cloth, round-collared coat and black [lit. "raven"] leather boots. The coat was mostly white in colour, ... its breast, shoulders and sleeves following the Spring Water attire, so mostly having decorations of *gu* catching geese and of various flowers and plants.

It is in the Jin historical records that the term Spring Water is established as signifying the standard pattern of a falcon attacking a swan or goose in a setting normally decorated with lotus or water-plants in bloom. The motif, however, of a falcon attacking a swan can be traced back to as early as the 4th century BC, where it is found in Siberian art (No. 30) (Dittrich, 1963, p. 170). The breath-taking fight between a falcon and a swan was doubtless meant to vividly convey the struggles of life and death in general. The jades using this motif of the spring hunt were during



Fig. 5-1a

the Yuan Dynasty called Spring Water Jades (*chun shui yu* 春水玉, and became one of the most popular subjects at that time (Zhang Guangwen, 1992, p. 111).

In April 1960, a jade object (Fig. 5-1a) was found with other burial articles in the excavated tomb of Qian Yu (钱裕墓) of the Yuan Dynasty, which is located 17

kilometres south of Wuxi City in Jiangsu Province (Wu Xi Munciple Museum,

1964, p. 52.). The oval-shaped greenish jade, with some brownish marks, shows a swan diving into some lotus leaves and water-plants in an attempt to hide from a falcon, which is already in landing posture with its wings flapping forward to prevent its moving forward, and its head turned to look down onto the swan. The depiction is very naturalistic. The long neck of the swan is turned 90 degrees against its body. It is desperately struggling, flapping its huge wings in an attempt to quickly plunge its heavy body into the tangle of lotus leaves and escape from the falcon's attack. The much smaller falcon exudes an ease and confidence in its attempt to catch the swan, which implies that there is no chance of the swan's escaping. This piece conveys a strong sense of reality, and indicates the excitement and life-and-death contest of the hunt. This carving is a fine example of the Spring Water Jades.

According to the inscription on the tomb-stone, the occupant of the tomb, Qian Yu, was a local landlord in Wuxi, who had no official title. He was born in 1247, and died in 1320 at the age of 73. From these dates, it has been argued that this jade could have been carved during the Song Dynasty, since, although the owner of the tomb spent almost fifty years of his life in the Yuan period, the first twenty-four years were spent under the late Southern Song, and in addition to his home town was in southern China, the domain of the Southern Song (Wu Xi Municipality Museum, 1964, p. 56). Chronologically and geographically, this line of argument is possible. Artistically, however, the motif of the falcon attacking the swan was not a subject associated with the mild southern Chinese. Their favourite topics were representations of a peaceful life without violence (Ke Dake, 1995, p. 4), this being particularly true before their life style was shaken by the Mongol invasion. There are a number of Song paintings, including some painted by the Song Dynasty Emperor Huizong himself, the finely depicted subject matter of which is often birds singing on the branches of trees that elegantly wave in a gentle breeze.

The motif of this kind of jade object therefore strongly suggests its artistic identity: a hunting scene of the northern nomads. Firstly, the carving style of this jade indicates the bold and vigorous fashion of the nomad. The blades of water-plants and stalks are

powerfully carved, and deep and wide. Although the head of the swan seems to be slightly polished, the curve of its neck is only roughly treated, appearing merely as a connection of the head, through a piece of water-plant, to the swan's body. Many details of this jade lack refinement, for instance only crudely carved edges indicating the shape of the lotus leaves. But these apparent "shortcomings" don't seem to detract in any way from the concept and beauty of the jade. This indeed is the most significant characteristic of Yuan jade. This one does not show every detail, but everything is there to be seen: the hunting idea is obvious, the layout is striking and fascinating, and the aesthetic is pervasive and penetrating. By way of contrast, the Song jade artifact is "the most fine, smooth, exquisite and delicate" (Gao Lian, Ming Dynasty, p. 472). The Song artists would not have carved a swan's neck crudely, or shaped lotus leaves with deep or almost broken midribs.

Secondly, this example of Spring Water Jade (Fig. 5-1a) also suggests that it could have been carved by somebody who had a rich personal experience of hunting or observing hunting scenes. Both falcon and swan are depicted in an almost photographically correct and naturalistic manner. The swan has a knob on its forehead which precisely indicates its species to be the mute swan (*Cygnus olor*) (No. 28). The "landing motion" of the falcon matches exactly the way the real bird lands (No. 31). The water-plants, lotus leaves and seed pod are depicted in a vivid and tangible way. Above all, the atmosphere of a breath-taking hunting scene has been successfully captured. Jades with a similar motif which were carved during the Ming and Qing dynasties are largely found to be devoid of this atmosphere, probably because the craftsmen lacked personal hunting experience or first-hand observation of hunting (Zhang Guangwen, 1992, p. 114).

Archaeological investigation in an attempt to date this jade has largely failed to reveal any evidence of "Northern objects" in Southern China during the Song period (Xu Lin, 1999, p. 85). It is not surprising that the rulers of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) were not attracted by the hunting scene motif favoured among the Mongols. How, then did this Spring Water jade piece end up in Southern China?

The inscription engraved on the memorial tablet of Qian's tomb, reads:

国朝下江南，公率乡人士孝顺，元帅所遣招扶王公和之，奇公貌，用公策，安辑就条理，帅府欲版授官，公辞曰：“吾保乡井而已”。公益敬公所为，遂结金石之交。

When our Yuan Dynasty moved down to conquer South-of-the-Yangtse, Qian Yu led out his fellow-villagers to show his filiality and compliance [to the Mongol rulers]. The pacification commissioner, Lord Wang Hezhi, despatched by our commander-in-chief, admired Lord Qian's looks, and employed his policy advice, and when there was tranquillity and concord and good order was achieved, the commissioner wanted to give him a courtesy appointment, but Lord Qian declined it. "I shall just stick to my village-well," he said. ... The commissioner, moved by this, respected Qian Yu's wish and attitude, and formed a "gold-and-rock" friendship with him.

From this inscription it is clear that the gentleman Qian Yu had found favour with the Mongol regime. His humble and unambiguous attitude won the respect of the officials of the Yuan regime. A "gold-and-rock" friendship was then formed between the gentleman Qian Yu and the Yuan commissioner. Bronze and rock or stone were used as images for solidity (*Ciyuan*, 1992, p. 3165). This Spring Water Jade piece (Fig. 5-1) could, therefore, have been given as a gift to the gentleman Qian Yu by the Mongol commissioner.

At the back of this particular Spring Water Jade, there is a pair of v-shaped holes, which seem to form a loop. One lies beneath the stalk of the water-plant near the swan's neck, and the other below and to the right of the falcon. To the left of

the ring, there is a hole with an obvious concavity, which seems to have been used to hold a hook or something similar. By chance, a jade hook was excavated from the same tomb (Fig. 5-1b). This hook is carved with lotus seed-pods and water-plants in high relief. There are striking similarities between these characteristics and those of the Spring Water Jade. The carving style is also bold and unrestrained, with the



Fig. 5-1b

blades and stalks of the water-plants powerfully carved, with rough details to indicate shape. This powerful and distinctive style in fact adds plentifully to the range of aesthetic effects employed by Yuan jades.

Both the jade ornament and the jade hook show similar surface erosion. This is certainly due in part to their having been buried for a long time. It may also, however, have come about because these two pieces of jade could have been cut from the one same stone, thus having the same mineral composition. Similar slight cracks in both of them are probably due to fractures that occurred when they were in use (Xu Lin, 1999, p. 86).



Fig. 5-1c

Both jades also have obvious traces left by drilling and the use of emery wheels, which suggest that they may possibly have been fashioned by the same craftsman. These consistencies and apparent coincidences strongly suggest that the jade hook and the Spring Water jade could have been used as a set of belt ornaments (Fig. 5-1c). Sadly, there is no record of their relative positions to one another when they were found. It is known, however, from research, that the belt used for a jade buckle of this type would have been made of either leather or silk, both of which were popular at that time (Xu Lin, 1999, p. 86).

It was a common practise in the Yuan court to wear a jade belt-ornament (Ye Ziqi, 1516, p. 61). Jade buckles and hooks were depicted both in art and literature (No. 32). Under Yuan law, a jade belt ornament could only be used by the first-grade officials, mostly in the court (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1939). However, according to the inscription on the tombstone, Qian Yu, the occupant of the tomb, was a very low-ranking, local Chinese landlord in Wu Xi. He was certainly far below the ranking of those allowed to use jades. This jade if given as a gift from the Yuan court inspector, was an indication of praise for his hard work and an object authenticating his appreciation as a “friend-of-gold-and-stone”, rather than a sign of his ranking.

- Falcon Attacking Swan In Flora Design

The large number of Spring Water Jades preserved in the Imperial Collections of both the Palace Museum in Beijing and the National Palace Museum in Taiwan basically manifest three fashions in the presentation of the Spring Water motif. The first and most common of these is a falcon attacking a swan (s) with lotus and water-plants forming the background.

One jade ornament (Fig. 5-2) has been selected here to show all the major symbolic characteristics of the spring hunt, as depicted in the first type of this kind of Spring Water Jade. It is a greenish jade, almost oval in shape. A swan



Fig. 5-2

is diving into lotus leaves, trying to escape from a falcon. The swan's long and elegant neck is already plunged deep beneath some of the water-plants, while its large body is still exposed in the open. The small falcon is above the swan in an obviously advantageous position. It is staring at the swan, and about to strike. The piece strongly indicates that there is not much chance for the swan to escape. A loop has been carved into the back of the object, which suggests that the piece could have been used as a belt-plaque. There are two rectangular-shaped holes on the ring through which the belt may have been slid.

The depiction of the swan with its long neck partially hidden behind the stalks of water-plants, seems to have been the standard way of presenting both the swan's desperate effort to escape and its frustration at becoming tangled in the water-plants. Another jade ornament (Fig. 5-3) with the standard presentation of the falcon attacking the swan in relief, also vividly sets off the striking life-and-death drama of the scene. The swan's large wings and parts of the falcon's tail have been depicted to convey a high-speed dive. The falcon's body is almost completely vertical, shooting

bullet-like towards the swan. The swan is depicted with its eyes and beak wide open in an apparent cry of desperation.



Fig. 5-3

This jade has been attributed to the Song or Yuan period (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 141). When one compares it with the jade plaque from the tomb of Qian Yu (Fig. 5-1a), the similarities of style are obvious: bold and powerful cuts into the stone present a vivid spring hunting scene and its breath-taking chase. This style was not common in Song

art, which normally represented milder manners and subjects, such as women's beauty and the detached aloof ideals of the scholar (Clunas, 1997, p. 62).

The matter of the life-and-death scene in the Spring Water Jade is shown very well in another jade object, Fig. 5-4. The same motif of the falcon attacking the swan is breath-takingly depicted, in a strikingly similar fashion to that displayed in Fig. 5-3. This jade is semi-translucent with a "jade skin" surface of brownish and reddish marks, and is carved partly in open-work and partly in high relief. A large lotus leaf, which is situated, in the form of a trumpet, in the bottom left-hand corner, looks very real. There is a woodblock print of lotus leaves in a medicine book of the



Fig. 5-4

Yuan Dynasty, as seen in Fig. No. 100. The similarity between this and the jade suggests a common aesthetic root at that time. The lotus flower depicted in Fig. 5-5 is another example of this kind. In this piece of jadework, too, there is a bridge-shaped loop at the back which suggests it also was made for a belt to be pulled through. The ring at the bottom of this object could have been used to suspend other



Fig. 5-5

objects. There is also a ring in Fig. 5-5, cleverly shaped from the bent stalk of a water-plant. This too could have been used to hang other objects from.



Fig. 5-6

When the Spring Water Jade is carved in open-work, it can sometimes have a very delicate appearance, ironically in the case of presentations of the subject of life-and-death in the spring hunt. The jade of Fig. 5-6 is an example of this kind, well illustrating this point. A falcon is attacking a swan, both carved in open-work amid lotus and water-plants. For all that this piece of

jade looks so fragile, its subject of matter of life-and-death struggle is all the same depicted very clearly. This is one of the major differences between Yuan Spring Water Jades and Ming jades. Chinese craftsmen in the Ming Dynasty lacked first-hand experience of hunting. As a consequence, their Spring Water Jades, which copied the motif from the northern nomads, lacked the vigour and breath-taking



Fig. 5-7

atmosphere of the mortal struggle of the subject matter (Zhang Guangwen, 1994, p. 70). The jade shown in Fig. 5-7, elegantly carved with the Spring Water motif, clearly demonstrates the obvious absence of any hunting atmosphere. A swan which is supposed to be escaping is presented almost as a phoenix dancing around the water-plants, on a delicately carved open-work

background. The falcon, which is supposed to be attacking the swan, is actually some distance away, flying with a lotus flower trailing from it and forming a beautiful surrounding decoration. The apparent lack of striking hunting scene for this jade object is not surprising for a piece from the Ming Dynasty when ornamentation and decoration were more in favour than the scene of a hunting kill (Zhang Guangwen, 1994, p. 70).

The Spring Water Jade, normally with a background of water-plants, is also, although rarely, found depicting clouds Fig. 5-8, for example, shows one such. In this jade, the swan is not diving into water-plants, but flying through the air and under attack from

the falcon. The depiction is very real and almost anatomically correct, with the movement of the chase vividly conveyed (No. 101).

- Falcon Attacking Swan

The second of the three groups of Spring Water Jades is depicted with more striking and straightforward characteristics. There are no lotuses, nor any water-plants, decorating their backgrounds. Nor is there any attempt to depict the scene of the falcon's chasing the swan. The falcon has already landed on the swan's head, and the swan actually being attacked by the falcon. The swan may still appear to be struggling, but has clearly no chance of escaping.



Fig. 5-8

The jades in Fig. 5-9 and Fig. 5-10 are both typical examples of this type. The first one comes from a private collection and the second from the Palace Museum, Beijing. Apart from their slight difference in size and in colour, they are extremely alike with regard to motif, manner of presentation and visual effect. Each is a ring which provides the support to "hold" the swan and the



Fig. 5-9a



Fig. 5-9b

falcon. Both of the swans and falcons are depicted with simplicity in a very naturalistic manner, and both pieces have a relatively high polish. Both jades are carved in open-work. The birds look so life-like that they almost seem ready to burst into flight. It is also interesting that each falcon has a ribbon attached to its foot, with two ends. This is one sign to indicate that it is a trained falcon, the ribbon being a label or mark to indicate its owner (Zhou

Nanquan, 1994, p. 138). It is recorded in a number of places in the historical archives that the Yuan court had a large number of falcon trainers. These were organised in military units, such as the Dadu Route Commands of Catching and Training Falcons which was established in 1277 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2257). Other Commands of Catching and Training Falcons were set up in 1285 and 1381 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2270-2271). It is recorded that during the time of the Yuan Emperor Wenzong

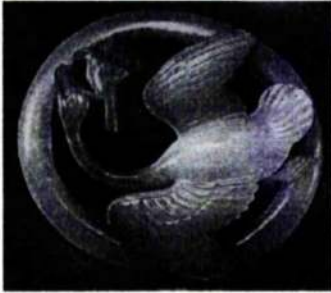


Fig. 5-10



Fig. 5-11

(Tuq-temür, r.1328-1332) there were 14,000 trainers of falcons and other birds of prey serving in the Yuan court alone, apart from the several times this figure of falcon trainers who lived dispersed all over the country (Shi Weimin, 1996, p. 31). One of the most important centres for training the falcons was in Nanyuan (present-day Yongdingmen, north of Beijing), and took up an area of about 30 square kilometres (Yu Minzhong, 1774, p. 1231). It is highly likely, therefore, that the ribboned falcons in Figs. 5-9 & Fig. 5-10 were “imperial” falcons which had been trained by, and served, the Yuan court (Yang Boda, 1992, p. 92).

Some examples of the Spring Water Jades have slight variations in their designs. Fig. 5-11 shows a pair of swans, one of which is being attacked by a falcon, while the other one is just able to escape. The jade illustrated in Fig. 5-12, on the other hand, shows a very straightforward hunting-scene and is more typical of this group of Spring Water Jades. The falcon has already landed on the swan’s head and has attacked it with its beak. The swan appears to be in great pain, with its long neck curled almost to breaking point. The actual situation presented by this jade could not be shown any clearer.



Fig. 5-12

When taken together, these two groups of Spring Water Jades demonstrate a number of interesting features which have come to form the standard for jades of this kind. Firstly, the swan is presented as in desperation and frustration at its inability to escape from being attacked. It is usually depicted diving towards a pond to hide, with its long and elegant neck apparently tangled in water-plants. In other instances, it is always depicted as already caught, with no water-plants in sight. Secondly, the bird of prey always appears to have been a falcon rather than a hawk or an eagle. The falcon was the favourite bird for hunting throughout the Liao, Jin and Yuan dynasties. The *hai dong qing* was the best of these falcons. The distinctive characteristic is the pointed end to the falcon's wings. This feature is not seen in other birds of prey (Nos. 33 & 34). Finally, the Spring Water Jade sought to convey the excitement of the hunt, its beauty lying in its effective portrayal of the life-and-death contest.

- Swan In Flora Design



Fig. 5-13a



Fig. 5-13b

The third group of Spring Water Jades is concerned with depicting a spring scene rather than the spring hunt. The most obvious

characteristic of jades of this kind is that no falcon is depicted. Jade plaque represented in Fig. 5-13 demonstrates a typical example of this kind. A swan in this jade is diving into water plants. There is no falcon chasing it around. The whole object is treated fairly brief with some strong cut and bold edges, which well present some Yuan carving style. In Fig. 5-14 & Fig. 5-15, the absence of the small falcon creates a hugely different effect from that of the first two groups of jades. There is a

strong sense of tranquillity, now that the swan shows no signs of the desperation of being chased or attacked. It, on the contrary, looks playful among the water-plants.



Fig. 5-14



Fig. 5-15



Fig. 5-16



Fig. 5-17

Two examples of this type of jade are illustrated in Fig. 5-16 and Fig. 5-17, which have been dated to the Yuan or Ming Dynasty. Except for the absence of the falcon, with their swans and water-plants they are nothing less than the typical Spring Water Jade. They do, however, somehow convey a feel of the playfulness of the birds and the calmness of the spring scenery, instead of the scene of breath-taking hunting, the feeling being mostly transmitted to our mind rather than something immediately perceptible to our eyes. The similarity to the other Spring Water Jades is perhaps an important reason why they have not been dated exclusively to the Ming period. These two particular jades are indeed finely carved and polished, characteristics not often seen in Yuan jade, such relative refinements only starting to appear more often in later dynasties (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 231). Nevertheless, these two jades still bear strong Yuan characteristics of style. The swan is tangled in water-plants, even though playing; and the jades have been polished by constant rubbing by handling, rather than by abrasive sands in the course of manufacture.⁴ They are

maybe smoother than is usual, but were certainly crudely carved, without fine

polishing. More archaeological evidence and further cultural research would be needed to achieve any more precise dating.

5.1.2 The Symbol of the Autumn Hunt

The *qiu nai bo* 秋鏐钵, (the autumn hunt or autumn hunting-place) as recorded in *History of the Liao* was, like the *chun nai bo* 春鏐钵 (the spring hunt or spring hunting-place) was one of the major seasonal hunts of the Liao Dynasty. It followed the same geographical route as the spring hunt (Zhang Guangwen, 1992, p. 112). *History of the Liao* records:

秋鏐钵，曰伏虎林，入山射鹿及虎。景宗领数骑猎焉，虎伏草际，战慄不敢仰视，上舍之，因号伏虎林。每岁车驾至，皇族而下分布水侧，伺夜将半，鹿饮盐水，令猎人吹角效鹿鸣，即集而射之，谓之舔咸鹿，又名呼鹿。(Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, pp. 374-375).

For the autumn hunt (*qiu nai bo*), it was a case of entering the Crouching Tiger Forest, and going up into the mountains and shooting deer and tigers. Emperor Jingzong would lead several mounted hunters to it, and the tigers, crouching in the vegetation, would be trembling and not daring to look up, and the emperor would let them go, which is why it was given the name of Crouching Tiger Forest. Every year when the imperial carriage arrived there, all, from the Imperial clansmen downwards, were deployed spread out along the sides of the river. They waited until it was nearly midnight, when the deer drank the salty water. The huntsmen were ordered to blow horns to mimic deer-calls, and when all the deer were gathered there, they shot at them, this being referred to as the Salt-licking Deer, and also being termed the Deer-calling.

This record vividly and succinctly describes the autumn hunt from start to finish. Just as with the spring hunt, the tradition passed to other nomadic peoples, to the Jurchens of the Jin Dynasty and to the Mongols of the Yuan Dynasty. Even during the last dynasty of China, the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the Deer-calling hunt was still regarded as one of the emperor's favourite activities (Yuan Liping, 1983, p. 37).

⁴ The two jades were and still are stroked, every now and then, by people in the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, in order to "polish" them clean rather than to make them shiny. I was encouraged to touch and fondle them when I was studying them in the National Palace Museum in 1999.

In the Liao Dynasty, the motif of the autumn hunt was also known as the Autumn Mountain (*qiu shan* 秋山). The official history records:

其从秋山之服则以熊鹿山林为文。(Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 984).

When they followed the Autumn Mountain costume, they had bears, deer, mountains and forests as their patterns.

Addressing specifically the matter of jade belt-plaques, *History of the Liao* further records:

其束带曰吐鹵……吐鹵，玉为上，金次之。犀象骨角又次之。…左右有双螭尾，……其刻多如春水秋山饰。(Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 985).

The belt they wore was called *tugu*. ... Regarding the *tugu*, the highest-ranking is jade, gold coming next after it in rank, and rhinoceros-horn, ivory, bone and horn coming below that. ... To the right and left of them, there are a pair of endmosts... What are carved on them are mostly such things as Spring Water and Autumn Mountain decorations.

The Mongols also continued this part of the hunting tradition and its cultural significance. One of the first matters recorded in the “Costume section” of *History of the Yuan* reads:

元初立国，庶事草创，冠服车辇，并从旧俗。近取金宋，远效汉唐。(Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1929).

When the Yuan first established their Dynasty, all court matters had to be established anew, and hats, robes, carts and carriages all followed old customs, adopting them from as recently as the Jin and Song dynasties and modelling them on as far back as the Han and Tang dynasties.

Costume decoration in the imperial court of the Yuan Dynasty continued with the same motif of the Autumn Mountain, in that way following the same fashion as the Liao and Jin peoples.

5.1.2.1 Autumn Mountain Jades

Although the Autumn Mountain Jades were carved in a variety of ways, which included simplicity and complexity, and fine and crude craftsmanship, their motif, as observed in the surviving imperial jades, was commonly a scene of animals such as tiger, deer and bear in a forest. The style was generally naturalistic, and sought to convey the beauty of Nature in autumn. Occasionally, mythical animals were depicted in the Autumn Mountain motif. In contrast to the violent spring hunt, the Autumn Mountain Jades were almost always mild in mood, and the animals shown as at peace in the wild. There was, however, still an underlying tension between these animals, since they do not normally live in harmony: carnivores such as the tiger and the bear were depicted watching ungulates such as deer.

The following groups of jades are illustrative of these points, although some are dated to the Liao or the Jin Dynasty. They have been selected to demonstrate the nomadic origins of the depiction of the Autumn Mountain in jade.

- Deer In Forest

Deer in a forest was one of the most common motifs in the Autumn Mountain Jades. A painting dated to the 10th century which represents herds of deer in an autumn forest of maple trees beautifully demonstrates the scene of autumn and demonstrates a strong nomadic taste in art (Tsao Hsingyuan, 1996, p. 204).⁵ The following group of objects

demonstrates this distinctive image. The jade in Fig. 5-19, is typical, and shows three deer in the shade of a forest in autumn, being probably a deer family of two parents

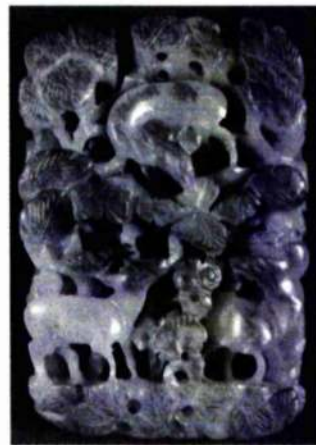


Fig. 5-19

⁵ This painting kept in National Palace Museum, Taiwan (No. 96) has been well analysed and located as a court painting made by the Khitan people probably during the Liao Dynasty. It contains a strong image of the nomadic deer hunting scene (Tsao Hsingyuan, 1996, pp. 200-201).

and their young. The stag has beautiful antlers. These are carved “beneath” the “jade skin”, the brownish marks of which make the antlers very striking. In front of him, there is a deer without horns, which is turning to look back at the stag. The third deer is most likely their offspring, and is depicted playfully, and with its head dramatically twisted backward towards tree-leaves. All the tree-leaves are cleverly presented in brown “shades”, derived from the jade skin, and in this way convey “golden autumn” colour. They are all depicted very realistically, the round leaf-edges and fairly dense vein-ribs sharing many similarities with the leaves of the alder tree (*Alnus*) (No. 35).

Regarding deer-couples, we note that there appears to be a pattern in their depiction in Autumn Mountain Jades. One of the deer is normally a stag with antlers, while the other is a doe without antlers. There is, however, one Autumn Mountain Jade in



Fig. 5-20

which neither of the pair of deer shown has antlers (Fig. 5-20). It is a white jade, with some yellow and light brown mark, seemingly from the jade skin. The two deer are carved in open-work, with one in front of

the other. Both have strong bodies, and neither has antlers. They have round ears and fairly long, pointed faces. The deer in front is turning its head to look at the deer behind, which is poking half of its face into tree-leaves. The two deer are depicted with strong muscles on their rumps, and are polished smooth. In contrast to the tree-leaves, which are largely yellow with some small reddish spots, the bodies of the deer are almost white to translucent.

Concerning the identity of this pair of deer without antlers, a number of possibilities suggest themselves. They could belong to species in which neither sex produces antlers. The Chinese Water-deer (*Hydropotes inermis*) is the only one of the 16 species of the family Cervidae in China that stands out in this way (Whitehead, 1993, p. 8). Though this animal is reported no longer living anywhere north to 34°N, it used to distribute ranging from Lower Reaches of the Yangtze River about latitude 28°N, northwards to 42°N, and east of longitude 111°E until recent decades (Sheng Heling,

et al, 1992, p. 97). This distribution included a separate subspecies *Hydropotes inermis argyropus* recognised in Korea, though unknown where the line of demarcation between the two subspecies occurs (Whitehead, 1972, p. 126).

Alternatively, the Woodland Caribou, also called the reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*), in which both sexes produce antlers, can suffer from malnutrition in early life with the result sometimes that neither sex grows antlers⁶ (Whitehead, 1993, p. 116). This deer has a range at the present time extending throughout northern Europe and Asia, from Norway in the west to the Bering Sea in the east (Whitehead, 1972, p. 94). It is also recorded that the animal has been found in China Northwest of Mount Daxinganling, of latitude 51°15'N - 53°15'N (Sheng Helin, 1992, p. 253). This is well inside the territory of the former Mongol Empire.

A third possibility for the identity of the deer without antlers, is that they were one of the kinds of animals in the family Moschidae. There are four species of musk-deer (*Moschus ssp.*) in China, and antlers do not grow on either sex of any of these species (Whitehead, 1993, p. 8). The Siberian Musk-deer (*Moschus moschiferus*) is the only species living widely in areas of the North (latitude 40°-54°), and also has four subspecies living in Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces in the south of China (Sheng Helin, 1992, p. 58). The adult has an extremely short tail, which has been described as a "broken tail" (Sheng Helin, 1992, p. 96). The coat of this animal is a dull brown colour, faintly flecked with grey in the winter, and reddish brown in the summer. The two deer depicted in the jade shown here have some brownish marks on their rumps, cleverly derived from the "jade skin". The musk-deer is characteristically seen alone or in pairs. The two deer in this jade seem to share a number of important features with the musk-deer (*Moschus moschiferus*).

⁶ Malnutrition in early life can also affect the White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and the Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and prevents the stags of both species from growing antlers. (Whitehead, 1993, p. 116) Neither of these species, however, is native to China (Corbet, et al, 1991, p. 129).

The tree-leaves carved in the jade object displayed in Fig. 5-20 are beautifully presented. The leaf-edges are deeply crenate, like those of oak trees (*Quercus*) (No. 36). The two deer are depicted in a calm and quiet atmosphere. The arrangement of one deer in front of the other, and with the front one turning round to look back, does not seem to be exclusive to the Yuan Dynasty, and is indeed a commonly found layout. A ceramic dish dated to the Song times shows almost exactly the same motif, as seen in No. 37. Passed on into the Yuan period, the motif appears quite pervasively in forms of art other than jade of the period. For example, there is a stone sculpture from the 13th century of a couple of deer carved in high relief on the Da Temple in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia (No. 38). One deer is standing in front of the other, with its head turning backward, looking at it. More examples of this kind can also be found in the Royal Ontario Museum, which has a good collection of Chinese Stone Tomb sculptures dated to from the Yuan to the Qing Dynasty (Parker, 1988, p. 50).

Among the collections of Autumn Mountain Jades, there is a very elegant one presenting two deer in a beautiful autumn and a mood of great tenderness and love (Fig. 5-21). This translucent white jade was excavated in 1974 from a Jin tomb in the ruins of Aulimigu City, present-day Suihua County in China's Heilongjiang Province (Yang Boda, 1993,



Fig. 5-21

p. 275). The two deer are beautifully carved in open-work, in the conventional manner. The ground and trees are stylised to form a very elegant enclosing triangle, which provides a frame for the entire object. Above the two deer, there is a bird flying in the sky. This jade ornament beautifully demonstrates its artisan's highly skilled carving techniques and the romantic charms of Nature in general.

The bird in this jade has been described as a swan (Heilongjiang Provincial Museum, 1993, p. 275). The shape of the bird it depicts is in fact too vague for us to be able to identify the bird. Yet it would not be stretching probability too far to suggest that that

it is indeed a swan or a goose, since migrant birds such as swans and geese do fly south from northern China in autumn. The bird in this particular jade, however, could be almost any bird, especially as it is carved in a slightly stylised way. The fairly logical assumption that it could be a swan or goose should not exclude the possibility that it might be another type of bird.

The two deer in this Autumn Mountain Jade are even more specifically identified, by Heilongjiang Provincial Museum, as a couple of Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) (Heilongjiang Provincial Museum, 1993, p. 275). This conclusion is probably based on the shape of the deer's antlers depicted in the jade, they being long ones, with a number of branches. Other deer of northern China are such as the Père David's Deer, which has too complex antlers, and the Roe Deer's antlers, which are too simple to match this jade. The moose's antlers are like multi-fingered palms and the reindeer has branches to its antlers which occupy a large volume of space. These four species can be excluded on account of the specific shapes of their antlers. The Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*) seems to be a possible "candidate" for the stag in this jade, as well as the Red Deer. The male of both Red Deer and Sika Deer have major trunks to their



Fig. 5-22

antlers, which support four or five smaller branches. They match this jade stag well.

If a jade object depicts only one deer, it is, it is commonly depicted as an antlered one. There are several examples of lone jade deer with antlers. Fig. 5-22 is a rubbing from a jade in Chang Suxia's collection (Chang Suxia, 1993, p.

232). It depicts the Autumn Mountain motif, with a deer

recumbent under trees. A similar kind of deer can be found incised on a gilded saddle in the Beijing Capital Museum.⁷ The gilded saddle was excavated in Wulangou in the Xianghuang Banner, Xilingol Menge, Inner Mongolia. It is 193.2g in weight, 20.8cm in height and 23cm in width. It is in the shape of an orchid, and the upper front part

⁷ It is forbidden to take photos in the Beijing Capital Museum, and there was no catalogue available. Sadly, it is therefore not possible to present a picture of this deer on the gilded saddle.

of the saddle has a reclining-deer design flanked with a pattern of peony and hawthorn flowers. The deer has its right foreleg stretched forward, and its other three legs tucked underneath its body. Its head is slightly raised, and its splendid antlers are presented in a realistic style.



Fig. 5-23

At a recent exhibition in Hong Kong, there was a jade deer (Fig. 5-23), which, although not depicting the typical Autumn Mountain motif, did show a striking resemblance to the jade rubbing deer in Fig. 5-22. It is an animal with a white-ish body, and some dark marks on its antlers, the antlers being long ones with a few branches. It has a strong

muscular rump and shoulder. Its joints and neck are deeply incised. Although it has been dated to the Song Dynasty, several Yuan characteristics, such as the deeply incised nature of the cuts on this jade deer, are too obvious to be ignored. By good fortune, a deer woven on a piece of fabric dated to the Yuan Dynasty (No. 39) has survived the passage of time. The fabric shows the deer woven into a beautiful scene of flowers and tree-leaves, some of which resemble those of the alder.

In the Inner Mongolian Museum, there is a bronze deer dated to the Warring States period (475-221BC), with a pair of antlers which are very similar to those depicted in jades of 1,400 years later (No. 40). This suggests that the motif of the deer with antlers has long been in great favour with the people of northern China. The other representations of deer of around 13th century tend to be somewhat standardised. The deer's fabulous antlers (Fig. 5-24) blend into the branches of a tree to form a disc representing the idea of the Autumn Mountain, or a relaxed form of the proper Autumn Mountain as shown in Fig. 5-25. What is interesting about this jade, is that the deer is there depicted with antlers that have fewer branches. None of the mature adults of the species of deer put forward above have antlers like this pair. What is most likely is that this piece depicts a less mature Red Deer or Sika Deer stag, such stages having more sparsely-branched antlers.

A striking example of a piece carved to suit the material and the aesthetic ideas of the artisan is another Autumn Mountain Jade from the Imperial Collection of the Palace



Fig. 5-24



Fig. 5-25

Museum, Beijing. It is a green jade with large areas of corruptions (Fig. 5-26). The jade has almost all the typical features of the Yuan Dynasty Autumn Mountain motif, possessing strong Yuan carving characteristics, with the exception of a small detail which does not seem to match reality - the stag's antlers. In this instance, the antlers are not depicted with branches but replaced instead with a strange lump of material on the stag's head. The whole object is not in open-work, and the deer and trees are depicted in low relief. The piece does not seem to have been limited by the available material, or by any impossible structure of the stone. As a matter of fact, there is large unworked area between the stag and the tree-leaves above it, where fairly large antlers could otherwise have been carved.

Interestingly, the stag with a lump on its head is found depicted around the 12th - 13th centuries in China not only in jades but also in textiles. No. 41 is a fragment of polychrome silk dated to this period. The animal embroidered into this piece of silk has a spotted body, suggesting a Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*). A striking feature of it, shared with the jade stag in Fig. 5-26, is the absence of branched antlers, and their replacement with a lump on its head. This lump appears again in another piece of fabric from 13th century China (No. 42). It is a very colourful hunting scene, of a tiger chasing a stag, against a flora background. Both the tiger and the stag are depicted in great detail, with the tiger's striped coat and stag's spotted body clearly indicated.



Fig. 5-26



Fig. 5-27



Fig. 5-28

The technical skill of the weaving around the 12th - 14th centuries, as shown by these two pieces of textile, reveals a remarkable ability to fashion complicated and exquisite works of art. The finest details of the animals' eyes, whiskers and muscles, as well as the petals, and stamens of the flowers, are clearly seen in both No. 41 and No. 42. Thus there do not seem to have been any technical reasons for the textile makers and jade carvers not having been able to depict - weave in these cases - the stag's antlers.

The depiction of the stag with a lump on its head occurs too often for it to be simply an indication of individual style. Two more jade stags have been found with this odd lump resting on their head (Fig. 5-27 & Fig. 5-28). The first, is a beautiful mutton-fat jade with a high polish, which was excavated in 1962 in Beijing. The lump has been referred to as *zhen zhu pan*

珍珠盘, meaning a "base of pearl", which in this case was in the shape of the glossy *lingzhi*-shaped flower (Xue Jie, 1993, p. 263). The latter symbolised good luck and a prosperous and long life. Some most fine intaglio lines can be found on its surface which suggest a velvet covering. The deer in Fig. 5-28 is depicted with greater simplicity. The lump is carefully carved, with petal-shaped edges shown in detail, while the rest of the stag's body is merely sketched in.

According to *Dictionary of Identification of Chinese Pharmaceutical Materials*, the term "base of pearls" refers to the coronet of the antler, on the surface of which there are pearl-shaped tubercles (No. 43) (Holmes, 1973, p. 69). The "base of pearls" of the Red Deer is normally 4.5cm-6.5cm in diameter, and 1.4cm-4cm in height (Sheng

Baoan. 1994. p. 322). It varies in size for different species of deer. Pearl-shaped tubercles grow not only around the coronet, but also on the beam of the antler, sometimes nearly reaching the point where the antler branches. A heavily pearled antler has the appearance of greater thickness but closer inspection shows that the beam, exclusive of pearling, is no thicker than its body pedicles. It certainly does not approximate the size and shape of the lump on the jade stag's head.

In some extreme cases, however, an antler can grow in an abnormal way, as indicated by Dr. Alastair A. Macdonald (Macdonald, 1998, Interview). Malformed antlers can grow twisted, or to look like a corkscrew. This can be caused by heredity or accident, or by a disease such as lung worm (Whitehead, 1972, p. 26). In more dramatic circumstances, abnormal antlers can be caused by castration or by severe damage to the testicles (Whitehead, 1993, p. 147). In the absence of the regulating effect of the hormone called testosterone, the velvet of the antler does not shed, but instead grows exuberantly. The result is a very bulky-looking and velvet-covered antler (No. 44a & No.44b). It looks like a malformed wig which has been placed on the shape on the deer's head, and as a consequence the "lump" is called a perruque (peruke) or a wig-head (Whitehead, 1993, p. 293). The example of a wig-headed deer seen in No. 44a & No. 44b) is a Hog Deer (*Axis porcinus*), which inhabits the border area of Yunnan Province and Burma (Sheng Helin, 1992, p. 171). This overgrowth of velvet has, however, also been recorded in Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*), Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*) (Whitehead, 1972, p. 26).

The biological misfortune of the animal, which resulted in the velvet in the shape of a lump, was rendered in Chinese art as having philosophical significance as a propitious symbol for good health and long life. Ironically, for it to be able to grow the "lingzhi-flower shaped" antlers, which are thought a panacea as well as a source of eternal life (Lec Yu-kuan, 1972, p. 372), the deer had to suffer agony with worms in its lungs, or to have damaged testicles, probably bleeding nearly to death in the wild, "in order to" have such a set of overflowing (misshapen) antlers.

The deer was not, however, the only animal depicted in the Autumn Mountain Jades. Mythical creatures were also employed in the Autumn Mountain Jade motif, and presented in similar fashion, as seen in Fig. 5-29. This translucent creamy jade with dark greyish speckles presents two animals depicted in a conventional way: one in the front with its



Fig. 5-29

head turned back to look at the other one behind. They both have horns and head like a goat's, manes like a horse's, and long tails like a Père David's Deer's (*Elaphurus davidianus*). Although they are not animals from real life, when we compare them with the previously mentioned jade objects employing a similar design, we see that they are obviously depicted in the fashion of the Autumn Mountain Jades. Mythical animals were extensively employed in Yuan jade-carving. These real-seeming but fictitious animals located in a natural setting helped the Mongols to express their longings to become supernatural, or to contact the supernatural. (McElney, 1998, p. 2).

- Tiger In Forest

In addition to the deer motif in the Autumn Mountain Jades, the tiger was another popular subject in the jades of this kind. The autumn hunt is recorded already in *History of the Liao*, as taking place in the Forest of the Crouching Tigers (Tuotuo, et al, 1345b, p. 374). Perhaps unexpectedly, the tiger is often depicted as a calm and mild animal alone or with its young in the autumn forests. Scenes such as those of breath-taking life-and-death hunting and killing which appear in the Spring Water Jades, are seldom seen in Autumn Mountain Jades when the tiger is the subject. Fig. 5-30 shows a typical example of this kind. It is a translucent white jade with large areas of yellowish brown patches. A tiger with her young are vividly depicted, the “mother-with-cub” motif. The mother tiger is sitting on the ground, with her hind legs underneath her body. She is lowering her head to lick her cub. The cub is lying

there cosily, being comforted by its mother. In the wild, tiger cubs don't leave their mothers until they are over two or three years old (Gao Yaoting, 1987, p. 353). The young tiger in this jade is, therefore, still an infant of less than three years old. The adult female is playing with, and caring for, her cub.

It represents a very calm, intimate and peaceful scene, which is in sharp contrast to the way the tiger has been described in such verses as: "When this king of beasts growls all animals flee to cover; but when his mighty roar breaks the mountain solitude, the winds rage until all nature trembles." (Ball, 1969, p. 17).

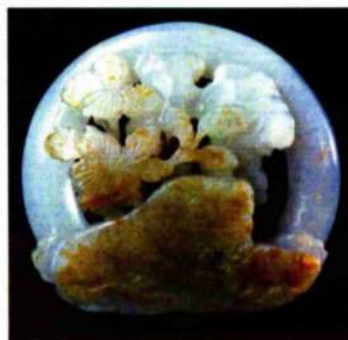


Fig. 5-30



Fig. 5-31a



Fig. 5-31b

The tigers in Fig. 5-31a and Fig. 5-31b are shown as on their own. These are two rubbings from jade belt-plaques. Although they are different in size, their designs show the same roots. Both tigers are carved with bold and deep incisions, so that their heads look almost "cut off" from their bodies. Both tigers are in a forest of some sort, possibly of alder (No. 35). The roundish shape of the leaves and their parallel ribs strongly suggest two of the main features of alder leaves. The alder is a widespread tree in northern China, and the tiger lives there in such forests (Zheng Shengwu, 1994, p. 105).

The tiger in Fig. 5-31b is standing with its front legs holding a tree trunk, seemingly trying to climb the tree. It

is commonly known that the tiger cannot climb trees. Also well known to every Chinese child is a legend which says that the cat in ancient time was the tiger's master. The cat taught the tiger many skills, such as how to run, to hunt and to survive. By the time the tiger graduated, he turned nasty and wanted to eat the cat for his dinner. The cat ran up a tree and said: "I have taught you everything I know,

except one thing, how to climb trees. That was my self-protection.” The story concludes that this is why tigers cannot climb trees (Lin Yiba, 1978, p. 27). Although it is a children’s story, it tells a truth concerning the biology of the tiger, that, while the tiger shares many of the abilities of the domestic cat, it cannot climb trees.⁸

So why is the tiger depicted in this way? The tiger does sometimes stand upright like the one in Fig. 5-31b, not to climb a tree but to scratch with its claws on the tree-trunk (Gao Yaoting, 1987, p. 356). This is a recognised behaviour pattern common to the female tigers.

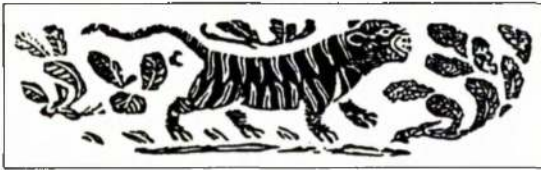


Fig. 5-32b



Fig. 5-32a

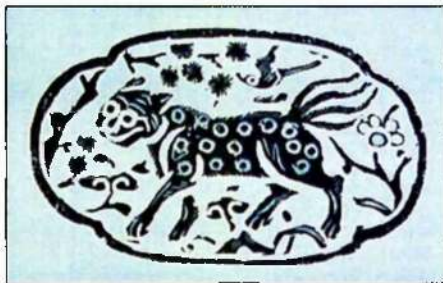


Fig. 5-33

catalogue. The animal, with its tiger’s face, has its leopard’s body incised with spots in intaglio circles all over, from its neck to its rump. It has, however, a feathered tail which makes it beyond doubt a mythical creature rather than any carnivore of the wild.

The tiger in the Jade of Autumn Mountain is almost always depicted in a naturalistic manner, displaying its enormous body and immense power (Fig. 5-32a and Fig. 5-32b). Creatures such as that in Fig. 5-33 can also, however, occasionally be found. This is a tiger-headed, leopard-bodied and phoenix-tailed animal, which is shown in a jade belt-plaque rubbing to be found in this present thesis’s jade

⁸ However, trained tigers by man, eg. in South Lakes Wild Animal Park can “climb” a 20 feet pole in order to get its food during the zoo feeding time (South Lakes Wild Animal Park, 1999, p.53).

Although this jade object has an unconventional Autumn Mountain motif, it does not contradict the standard Autumn Mountain design in very many respects. The basic intention of the genre is to have a tiger (or tiger-like animal in this case) walking calmly in a forest, so as to well display the scene of autumn. It is, all the same, “odd” that this animal is neither tiger nor leopard, but a tiger-faced and feather-tailed leopard. Animals like this do not constitute the main trend of the Autumn Mountain Jades.

- Group Of Animals In Forest

The Autumn Mountain Jade includes a third type of jade, a group of different species of animals in the autumn forests. Fig. 5-34 is an example. This translucent white jade is fairly flat and almost oval in shape, with a pedalled edge. A tiger is sitting under a tree on one side of the jade, and on the other side a bear has turned its head to look at an eagle on the tree behind it. The animals and trees are all carved in relief.



Fig. 5-34a

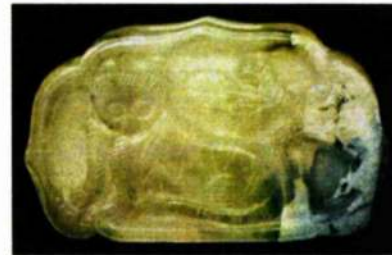


Fig. 5-34b

The eagle is not carved in detail. It can be identified as such, however, because of the bear beside it (Yang Jie, 1993, p. 280). In Chinese art, the motif of an eagle and a bear symbolises a hero (Zhou Nanquan. 1994. p. 149). The word for eagle is pronounced in Chinese *ying* 鹰 and bear, *xiong* 熊. When *ying* and *xiong* are uttered together, they are a homophone for the word *yingxiong* 英雄 meaning “hero”. The original meaning of “eagle” and “bear” is lost in this two-syllable compound, and the characters for it are also different ones. It was thus very clever to make an Autumn Mountain Jade which combined the Mongol idea of the autumn hunt with a Chinese concept of valour. It suggests that the jade was either made by a Chinese artisan, or was made in the Yuan court after the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty and when Chinese artistic influence had become pronounced.

The last Autumn Mountain Jade ornament considered in this chapter serves as a



Fig. 5-35a



Fig. 5-35b

summary of this type of jade (Fig. 5-35). The object is a beautiful translucent white jade with both sides of it containing pictures of hunting. On one side, gazing with a look of shining lust, there are an eagle and another bird standing on tree branches. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, eagles were one of the birds of prey trained in the Yuan court for the spring hunt. It is not possible to identify the species of the other bird, owing to the vagueness of its depiction. This side of the picture, however, effectively displays the motif of the spring hunt, although not that of the falcon attacking swan. On the other side of this jade, there is a tiger sitting under an alder tree with its head turned back, and its ears pricked. Two deer, a stag and a doe can be seen running in a forest, seeming to have sensed the presence of the tiger and to be attempting to escape. The tiger has its head turned around its shoulder. Its ears are raising as if listening attentively⁹ and eyes watching the two deer, which are running to escape

the tiger's prey. The tiger is carved "underneath" the jade skin in colour brownie yellow, to indicate the colour of the tiger's fur in real life. With its two forelegs in stretching position, the tiger appears to be about to stand up.

Another example of the tiger is to show one of tiger's natural behaviours - to scratch tree trunks (Fig. 5-31b). This is a recognised behaviour among female tigers (Gao Yiaotin, 1987, p. 356). These biological details of the tiger are vividly presented in jades, when they were not so realistically depicted during previous dynasties (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 242).

⁹ The tiger raises its ears only when it is in alert, or ready to prey (Zhu Yaoxi, 1995, p. 50) (No. 45).

Three kinds of tree appear in this jade (Fig. 5-35): on one side of it, the alder with round-shaped leaves, and the maple with star-shaped leaves that have formed a forest in which the tiger and three deer are depicted; and on the other side of the jade, a pine tree up in which the bird and the eagle are standing.

5.2 SUMMARY

The motifs of Spring Water and Autumn Mountain were favourite subjects of hunting scenes in the Liao Dynasty, Jin Dynasty and for the Mongols of the Yuan Dynasty. It can be difficult to draw clear lines between the three nomadic peoples about the dating of the jades because the motifs are the “property” of them all. These jades share strong common characteristics, rather than having recognisably different styles.

Firstly, most Spring Water Jades and Autumn Mountain Jades seem to have been made of the Khotan jade. Their translucent quality, white with a waxy appearance, made them really special. Fig. 5-2, Fig. 5-9 and Fig. 5-35 are the most typical examples.



Fig. 5-18

Secondly, animals in both types of jades were depicted in an extremely naturalistic style. The breath-taking hunting of the Spring Water ones and the calm scene of Autumn Mountain ones were depicted with representations of birds and mammals which were almost true to life.

Thirdly, the Spring Water motif did not completely decline or die immediately after the Yuan Dynasty (Zhang Guangwen, 1994, p. 70). The change in time and culture, from the nomad to the Chinese, did, however, have certain impacts on the portrayal of this hunting theme. As portrayed from the Ming Dynasty onwards, the theme did

not seem to focus on the question of life and death, but was more decorative and shapely, without much substance (Zhang Guangwen, 1994, p. 70). The jade object in Fig. 5-18 is a typical example of this. The words “made under supervision for imperial use” (*yu yong jian zhi* 御用监制), and “made in the Xuande reign-period of the Great Ming Dynasty” (*da Ming Xuande nian zhi* 大明宣德年制) are engraved on the back of the jade. The Ming reign-period Xuande lasted from 1426 to 1435, and was thus almost 100 years after the Yuan period. The atmosphere of hunting, hiding, escaping, fighting and finally catching and killing, which were vital elements of the Yuan Spring Water Jade, do not appear so obviously or as excitingly in this jade. On the contrary, it looks quite peaceful in its half-moon-shaped “frame”, even though there is indeed a falcon pecking at the head of a swan. There is no obvious mechanism or set of holes at the back of the object to indicate its possible usage as a belt-plaque. It is, however, worth pointing out, and stressing, that half-moon shaped jades are recorded as having been worn by the Yuan emperor at state ceremonies (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1931). This jade ornament, made as a work of art in the mid-Ming period, could, therefore, have been derived from a model employed by Yuan fashion.¹⁰

Finally, almost all Spring Water Jades and Autumn Mountain Jades mentioned in this chapter are belt-plaques or buckles. They constitute a distinctive nomadic form of costume ornaments. In later chapters, however, other kinds of jade adornments of various motifs will be addressed, to further reveal the significance of animals depicted in jade under the Mongols.

¹⁰ Two pieces of half-moon-shaped jade ornaments like this could have well been hung on a belt like that represented in No. 46.

CHAPTER SIX: JADE ANIMALS IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE YUAN DYNASTY

Chinese cultural life during the Yuan Dynasty was not declining. It was, in fact, developing to a new stage under the Mongols (Xiu Aoyang, 1995, p. 12). Strong influences from the Song Dynasty predominated in the culture and art as a whole in China throughout the Yuan period. For a scholar-official, his writing table was a symbol of his achievement and prestige. For a high-ranking official, his table was equipped with all the necessary writing instrument of the finest material – jade (Tsiang, 1983, p. 13). Traditional education was maintained, particularly in the private academies that had been established by Song scholars (Hucker, 1975, p. 289). Artists refined their skills and styles. All-time masterpieces of fiction and drama were produced (Gu Jianhua, 1995, p. 2). In the Yuan court, Chinese scholarship was re-valued, and came to be respected by the Mongol rulers (Qin Zhiyong, 1995, p. 159). Traditional Chinese culture is found to have been reflected and carried on in many respects under their rule.

6.1 JADE ANIMALS AS SCHOLARLY ACCESSORIES

Certain scholarly accessories or appurtenances are in China traditionally known as the Four Treasures of the Study: writing-brush, Chinese ink, paper and ink-stone. Gradually, the term Four Treasures of the Study came to have a broader sense, which included other things that scholars employed in their studies. Things such as the paperweight, arm-rest (*bi ge* 臂搁), pen-holder (*bi tong* 笔筒), pen-rest (*bi jia* 笔架), ink-bed or ink-stand (*mo chuang* 墨床), inlay and almost anything intellectual and decorative in the study came to be rendered artistically, appreciated and treasured. Despite the Mongols' less intellectual traditions, the scholarly objects were evidently not less cherished in the Yuan court. It is recorded that the Mongols, before their removal to Beijing, had already started importing paper, stationary, printed items from China (Rossabi, 1983, p. 95). The industry of making these scholarly objects is

certain to have continued to flourish abundantly during the Yuan Dynasty (Zhang Shufen, 1991, p. 659).

6.1.1 Paperweights

The paperweight has been recorded as early as the Song period (Ciyuan, 1992, p. 3207). Traditionally, paperweights were made of bronze, iron, stone or bamboo. Animals of many kinds were favourite subjects depicted on them. This tradition continued during the Yuan Dynasty. It is recorded in *Illustrations of Ancient Jades* that Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322), one of the most famous painters of the Yuan period, who also sometimes served the Yuan emperor in court, bought a jade paperweight in the form of a *bixie* - chimera (No. 47) (Zhu Derun, 1341, p. 610). The object was literally referred to as a “book weight”. This record provides an important piece of evidence that paperweights made of jade were indeed employed in the Yuan court.

Lions



Fig. 6-1

Among the jades considered for this thesis, the lion is one of the animals repeatedly depicted in the form of a paperweight. The jades in Fig. 6-1 and 6-2 are two good examples of this, and show how the animal was depicted. Fig. 6-1 is a white jade of two lions, an adult and its young. The adult animal is depicted with a heavy mane, and

with its head turning backwards. It is grasping an embroidered ball with its right forepaw. The lion cub is jumping forward with its two forepaws raised high, springing onto the ball. Its mouth is slightly open and its teeth bared.

This jade is carved in a fairly straightforward manner. A few long, deep intaglio lines on the bodies indicate the lions' enormous strength and energy. This simple but bold

treatment of the jade can also be found on a Yuan stone-lion sculpture (No. 48) uncovered from the ruins of the Yuan capital Dadu.

This jade has been described in the catalogue literature as a mother lioness with her cub (Palace Museum, 1987, p. 16). In the real world, the most obvious feature of a male lion is its mane (Zhu Yaoyi, 1995, p. 47; Baker, et al, 1954, p. 153). A maneless male lion is sometimes seen, but certainly never a lioness with a mane (Hunter, 1999, p. 26). It is, therefore, more appropriate to title this jade “Two lions” rather than “Lioness with her cub”.

The motif of lion(s) playing with a ball emerged during the Han Dynasty (Zhou Nanquan, 1995, p. 219). It became a favourite subject, and gradually evolved with two kinds of significance. The original idea, was the depiction of a folk entertainment, that of people dressed up as a lion, or lions, playing with a ball rendered artistically, the ball became a symbol of wealth with an intricate coin-pattern, signifying money, as shown on the ball in Fig. 6-1. The other sense, in which this particular jade object was used, had it featuring two lions instead of one. When this motif occurs, the focus seems to be not only on wealth, but also on two particular officials, represented by the lions.

The two lions on this paperweight refer to the Grand Preceptor (*tai shi* 太师) and Junior Preceptor (*shao shi* 少师). *Tai* means “grand” in Chinese. *Shi* is the word for “lion”, and is also a homophone for *shi* meaning “preceptor”. *Tai shi*, therefore, signifies the Grand Preceptor of the imperial court, and not a large lion. The Grand Preceptor was a very high-ranking court official (Hucker, 1985, p. 60). Beside the Grand Preceptor, there was the Junior Preceptor, here represented in the jade by the small lion (Fig. 6-1). The titles of Grand Preceptor and Junior Preceptor were held by nobles in the imperial court, the former being one of the Three Dukes (*san gong*), who were nominally in charge of central government under the emperor, and the latter one of the Three Solitaries (*san ku*), these eminent officials ranking just below the Three

Dukes, constituted a court committee in charge of the education of the Princes and Princesses of (Hucker, 1985, p. 60).

A jade paperweight in this form would have been perfectly apt for demonstrating its owner's status of seniority, wealth and supposedly intellect in the imperial court. Interestingly, there is a small hole drilled through it, in the right rump of the small lion. The hole is large enough to allow a cord to pass through and for the jade to hang as an ornament. This gives rise to the suspicion that one of the owners of this scholarly object could have been a non-scholar. He may have been a Mongol "preceptor" in the court, who had chosen to hang the jade on his costume as an ornament, despite its bulk and weight, rather than use it as a paperweight. If so, this use may possibly reflect his illiteracy.

Considering the special needs and circumstances of the Mongols, some jade paperweights made in the Yuan court indeed were produced with dual functions. They could be used either as paperweights or as hanging ornaments. Fig. 6-2 is a typical example. It is a translucent white jade of two lions, an adult one and its young, playing, on a base. There are several "natural gaps" on and between the animals' bodies. This strongly suggests that any one of these holes could have been used to put cord through for the purpose of hanging it from something. What is more, this jade has a somewhat curious set of measurements, 5.8cm in height, 5.5cm in width and 1.8cm in thickness, which seem to make it slightly too small for a paperweight, and too bulky to be a hanging object on a costume. It may have been considered suitable for either purpose. Some jade objects made in the Yuan court which were identified as paperweights in later dynasties, are distinctive because of their peculiar measurements, the like of which cannot easily be found in other periods (Zhang Guanwen, 1998, Interview). The hypothesis that they possibly had the dual function of objects stationed in the scholarly study and of costume ornaments borne around, especially in the Yuan court.

The style of the jade in Fig. 6-2 illustrates some aspects of the carving fashions also commonly practised in stone sculptures during the Yuan period. For example, there are 24 lion sculptures from a bridge, originally called Zhou Bridge (*zhou qiao* 周桥), in the Palace Museum, Beijing. The bridge was built as part of the construction of the Yuan capital Dadu (Jiang Shunyuan, 1990, p. 37), during the establishment of the Yuan court there. The adult and young lion in No. 49 share some strong characteristics with the jade lions in Fig. 6-2. More of their characteristics can also be found in No. 50, a “street-guard” made during the 14th century and now found in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia,¹ and in No. 51 which was retrieved from the ruins of the Yuan capital Dadu in 1989.



Fig. 6-2

Horses

Jade paperweights in the Qing Court

Collection are also found in the motif of a horse and groom. One of these is carved in a greenish jade (Fig. 6-3). It depicts a horse with its head turned back and mouth slightly opened, and beside it the seated figure of the groom. The horse has a pair of olive-shaped eyes,



Fig. 6-3

eyes, which are extended laterally by a line from the corner of the eye. This feature of the horse's extended eye-line, together with the turned head, mane in sheaves and ribs depicted in realistic style has been identified as a new style in jade horse-carving which appeared during the Yuan period (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 175).

¹ The photograph of this stone lion sculpture in No.50 was taken by the author of the thesis in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia in 1998.

The groom in Fig. 6-3, has a pair of large, round eyes and his nose is short and flat, and they have been amusingly described as “tubes-of-spring-onion” by a jade-antique dealer (Qian Weipeng, 1998, Interview). On the groom’s lower jaw, there are some crudely carved lines to depict his beard. Marco Polo recorded in his *Travels* that the Mongols did wear beards (Polo, 13th century, p.133). The jade groom is classified as a *hu ren* 胡人 (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 175), a term used by the Chinese to refer to various northern non-Chinese peoples including the Mongols in ancient times (Zhou Xianrui et al, 1994, p. 118). He is wearing a long-sleeved long gown, with his hands hidden in the sleeves, a practical habit of the Mongols to help them withstand the cold weather in the north (Cai Zhichun, et al, 1993, p. 440). The long gown opens at the front, with one side-flap overlapping the other. This is typical of Tartar style (Shi Weimin, 1996, p. 88). The groom’s gown is tied tight around his waist with a rope or sash. The Mongols always tied their long gown in this way, not only for the practical convenience of it, but also because the rope symbolised the man’s power, indicating his social or official ranking, by the use of different colours or materials (Namu Jila, 1995, p. 41; Huang Nengfu, et al, 1995, p. 246). His hat is round-brimmed, with a scarf-like top. The style of hat and long gown can be seen on pottery figures from Yuan tombs (No. 52). In *Sir Grass-and-Woods*, it is recorded that the Mongols, “both officials and commoners, all wear hats with brims either round all the way round, or round in the front and square at the back” (Ye Ziqi, 1516, p. 61).

This jade (Fig. 6-3) presents a vivid picture of horse-herding, an important aspect of Mongol life. It has, however, been argued, on the basis of jade’s scholarly function and in consideration of the Mongols’ generally illiterate condition, that this piece could have come from the Song Dynasty (Zhang Lanxian, et al, 1997, p.42). It is true that during the Song Dynasty the “treasures of the study” became more luxurious and extravagant. Jade, gold and other kinds of precious materials were employed (Yang Boda, 1998, p. 13). The evidence does not, however, prove that the Mongols, because of their less intellectual or less bookish nature, lacked interest in scholarly objects. More importantly, it is difficult to believe that a Chinese craftsman of the Song period would have carved a jade paperweight to depict a Mongol groom with

his horse, especially since the Song Dynasty was for a long period gathering its strength to fight against the Mongols, its worst enemy in the thirteenth century (Zhao Chaomin, 1995, p. 253). It would have been the last reasonable thing for the Song Chinese to do to portray the Mongol invaders in such art. It remains possible that this piece could have been presented to a Chinese official by a Mongol.

It has also been suggested that this jade horse with groom (Fig. 6-3) was produced during the Ming or even the Qing Dynasty (Qiu Fuhai, 1994, p. 256). The brownish colour on groom's long gown and his face does not seem to be a natural colour. It looks more like an artificial colour caused by a fire-burn, or by the penetration of some herbal dyestuff, intended to give it an "old look". What is more, there are some small broken areas on the brownish area of the groom's face, which could well be cracks made during burning, but not ones caused by natural ageing and decay.

There is an imperial record archived in the Ming imperial court collection, that this jade paperweight was burnt in a fire (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, Interview). The Forbidden City experienced a number of fires at different times throughout its history (Zhao Qichang, 1995, p. 358; Wang Jianying, 1986, p. 129). As a consequence, many of the treasures of the imperial collection, suffering from these disasters, were damaged to varying degrees. It would not be surprising if this jade was involved in a fire and the groom's face became burned and fractured in the course of it. By good fortune, this jade, with its demonstration of the vigour of Yuan jade-carving, was not too badly damaged (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 231).

Camels

It was also a common practice to employ various other animal images when making paperweights. The Yuan jade next to be considered is a camel with its handler (Fig. 6-4). It is a greyish-celadon jade with extensive brown inclusions. The camel is recumbent, and both it and its handler are carved in full relief, and in realistic style. It is a one-humped camel, although the extent of the musculature on its rump is such

that it almost looks like a bump forming another hump at the end of the lumbar vertebrae. When compared with the dromedary (*Camelus dromedarius*), the real-life one-humped camel (No. 53a), it is seen that this jade animal could have been rendered directly from a living animal, perhaps from one in the wild.

Despite the camel on this jade's (Fig. 6-4) only having one hump, it has been labelled a Bactrian Camel (*Camelus bactrianus*), the two-humped camel, by the Museum of East Asian Art (Forsyth, et al, 1994, p. 340). It is true that the only type of native camel widely found in China and Mongolia has been the two-humped camel. In ancient times,



Fig. 6-4

it provided the Mongols with transport, milk, meat and wool, as well as having ritual and symbolic roles (Bosson, 1995, p. 18). The Mongols were quite capable of depicting this animal in art with great accuracy. An example is the gold-plated silver seal of a camel shown in No. 54, which was an imperial seal granted in 1326 to an eminent Tibetan monk by the Yuan emperor (Shi Shuqing, 1996, p. 433). The animal is clearly a Bactrian Camel (*Camelus bactrianus*): its two humps are depicted, and its sturdy physique is well portrayed (No. 53b). Its appearance is very true-to-life if we compare it with the real beast (No. 54).

The one-humped Dromedary Camel, although widely reported from North Africa and the Middle East since 4000 BC (Whitfield, 1985, p. 132),² was not unknown to the Mongols. Reference to the species can be found in their literature and art. The most convincing evidence of the Dromedary in their home area has been discovered in ancient cave-paintings, which strongly suggest that this camel has been known in Mongolia from at least the 5th century (Gu Fu, et al, 1999, p. 35).

² It is believed that the Dromedary Camel (*Camelus dromedarius*) is a biological remnant of the ancestor of the Bactrian Camel (*Camelus bactrianus*). The Dromedary Camel's foetus commences development with two humps, one of which disappears after a week of pregnancy (Hare, 1998, p. 231). The single-humped camel is said to have been extinct in the wild for over 2000 years. They are now only found domesticated, in Southwest Asia and Africa.

It has also several times been recorded in historical writings, as an exotic animal tribute submitted to the Chinese throne by foreign countries, from as early as back in the Han Dynasty (Gong Yu et al, 1992, p. 51).

Although the camel on this jade seems to have a “foreign” identity, its handler is clearly Mongol. He is dressed in a long gown with long narrow sleeves. He has a belt of some sort around his waist, to tie up the gown. He is wearing a hat with a scarf-like lock of thread on the top of it. All these features can be found in No. 52. Interestingly, in the book *Southern Village Plough-Break Records* by Tao Zongyi of the Yuan period, there is a list of 50 colours that people favoured at that time for their daily clothing, 27 of which are different shades of brown (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 133). The handler on this jade, by chance or on purpose, is also dressed mainly in brown, the colour for which derives from the brownish skin of the stone. Brown was neither the Song Dynasty’s favourite colour for use, nor to the taste of dynasties after the Yuan period (Huang Nengfu et al, 1995, p. 197 & p. 267).

As far as the carving style is concerned, this jade is rendered in a bold manner, with the shapes of the animal and its handler depicted with concision. This same style can be found in many of the Yuan jades discussed in this thesis.

6.1.2 Arm-rests

The scholarly object called “arm-rest” was firstly invented to prevent an arm’s smudging newly written lines during the process of writing (*Ciyuan*, 1992, p. 2266). Traditionally, Chinese calligraphy was written from the top of the page to the bottom, and from the right of the page to the left. This way of writing does not seem to be very convenient, especially for right-handed people, and almost all Chinese write with their right hand. When writing, the arm or wrist can smudge the newly written lines to the right of the arm, if the arm is not raised up or suspended high enough above them. In order to prevent this, the “arm-rest” of black lacquer was firstly invented by Japanese (*Ciyuan*, 1992, p. 2266). The conventional size of the “arm-

rest” was about 6 to 7 *cun* (about 12cm) long and 2 *cun* (about 4cm) wide. According to Tu Long in his book *Facilities in the Studio*, jade was subsequently employed to make arm-rests. These are normally described as rectangular objects with two short ends which were curved underneath to form the supports of a mini “bridge” (Tu Long, Ming Dynasty, p. 544). It secured the line which had just been written, protecting it from being touched by anything such as the hand, arm or sleeve. Thus the arm-rest acted more as a “shelter” over the lines of fresh writing, rather than as a platform for the arm to rest upon.

Fig. 6-5 shows a very good example of the arm rest. It is a translucent greenish-coloured jade, of two splendid *chi* dragons with *lingzhi* flowers in their mouths, set in high relief. Around them, stylised clouds



Fig. 6-5

form the background. The two almost identical *chi* dragon is carved one at each end, facing one another. They act as supports, the arm-rest slightly arching upwards, like a curved tree leaf, so that it can form a bridge over newly written lines.

An alternative opinion of the use to which this jade was put has been published, asserting that it was used as a plaque (Yang Boda, 1991, p. 134). Plaques were used as belt ornaments or as decorations on costumes. These plaques normally had a couple of holes in them, or loops at their back, for threading a cord or belt through. The jade in Fig. 6-5, however, does not have anything of that kind. The two slightly inward-carved ends are furthermore not curled enough to form belt-loops or -hooks.

6.1.3 Ink-beds (Ink-stands)

Another suggestion, made because of the curved depressions at each end, is that the jade in Fig. 6-5 could have been used as an ink-bed, the support for the ink-cake (Nott, 1962, p. 143). This hypothesis is not too far-fetched, and specific mention of this jade object in the historical archives is lacking. As discussed above with respect

to Fig. 6-1 & Fig. 6-2, jade objects could have been made with more than one particular purpose in mind. Perhaps one of the best representatives of the ink-bed is the one that can be found in Fig. 6-6, and which has been listed as an ink-bed (or ink-pallet), in the Qing Court Collection in the Palace Museum. It is a greenish jade, which when placed under light, has a slightly yellow semi-translucent appearance. A



Fig. 6-6

vigorous dragon is represented dancing around litchi flowers. The dragon's scaly body and the litchi's matte skin, intricately carved in open-work, make an ideal ink-bed. The large areas of open-work would allow air to circulate, and thereby protect the ink-cake from remaining

wet or sticking onto the piece, especially in hot and humid weather.³

This jade does not seem, however, to have supports of any kind. It does not have the shape of a "bridge", nor is there a "stand" for the ink-block, as pointed out by Nott (Nott, 1962, p. 143). Yang Boda argued that Fig. 6-6 was possibly a plaque, or that it is possible that it was used as a plaque or ornament (Yang Boda, 1991, p. 134). Its size is slightly too large for a belt hook, however, nor does it allow enough space for cords to suspend the piece. It is possible that this jade could have been used as a "mobile" ink-bed which could be hung from something during transportation, or as an ornament.

6.2 JADE ORNAMENTS

The Mongols, despite their deserved reputation for brutality during military campaigns, were a people with its own considerable artistic interest and tradition. They had a tendency to decorate every item on their body and the implements they used every day. Costume decorations formed a large part of this artistic repertoire,

³ Chinese ink was originally, and still is, made of carbon and animal jelly, such as pig bile. It can become sticky or gluey if not properly stored in a dry place. (Jiang Shuchen, 1996, p. 557).

and will be discussed intensively in Chapter Seven. In this Chapter, the focus is on the adornments and inlay used to decorate city life that the Mongols learned to appreciate when they settled in Dadu after the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty.

One example of this type of decorative jade is shown in Fig. 6-16, a group of four geese, excavated from a tomb dated to the Yuan Dynasty (Yang Boda, 1993, p. 128). The ornaments are presented in full relief, and no holes are found on any of them. They are therefore not pendants.



Fig. 6-16 (one of 4)

Although not large in size, their shapes make them unsuitable to be held or be attached to a belt. They are indeed ornaments for adorning a house. They could have well been made by Chinese artisans, in spite of the fact that they were excavated from Xian City, which was far away from Mongolia. They certainly show a strong sign of having been used by city-dwellers, who did not move around with such household decorations.

The other type of decorative jades for household use was inlay on boxes. Small boxes or fancy containers embellished with jades or semi-precious stones as inlay were widely appreciated during the Yuan Dynasty, especially by women (Bartholomew, 1995, p. 84). Traditional Chinese jades were not often made for this purpose, possibly owing to the Chinese people's respect for the stone and for the symbolism with which they surrounded it (Easter, 1903, pp. 9-17).

6.2.1 The Dragon-among-flowers Inlays

The motif of a dragon dancing among flowers is common in jade marquetry made in the Yuan imperial court. An example of this is shown in Fig. 6-7. The dragon, set in high relief, does not have an elaborately decorated body, but instead, is simple and polished smooth, characteristics often seen early in the Yuan Dynasty. Not surprisingly, because of its "simple style", this dragon is sometimes dated to the Song Dynasty (Zhou Nanquan,

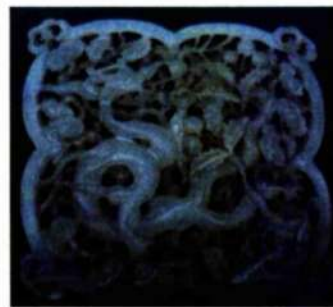


Fig. 6-7

1994, p. 372). An example of a Song dragon is shown in Fig. 6-8. Only a few short intaglio lines indicate its joints and muscles. The jade has been dated to the Song period because the dragon is dancing amid bamboo (Zhou Nanquan, 1995, p. 154). The Song influence on dragon-carving continued into the beginning of the Yuan period. Smooth-bodied dragons with simple decoration are likely to be dated to the early rather than the later Yuan period. An example is Fig. 6-9, a greyish white jade with some brownish “jade skin”. The dragon on it has a heavy mane waving in the air and a smooth body without any decoration, which strongly resembles some dragons shown in Chapter Seven, such as in Fig. 7-28 (Chapter Seven). The dragon in Fig. 6-9 is not depicted in a floral design. It does



Fig. 6-8

not, however, appear less flower-surrounded, as it is inserted in a box the four corners of which are shaped as petals.



Fig. 6-9

Jade dragons made during the late Yuan Dynasty became more elaborate and intricate in design. Two examples are Fig. 6-10 and Fig. 6-11, in both of which the dragon has an elaborate body-form carved with fine scales. In both jades it is set in open-work, and carved to exhibit enormous vigour. Intricate decoration of the dragon can also be found in some Yuan ceramics (No. 55a) and textiles (No. 56).

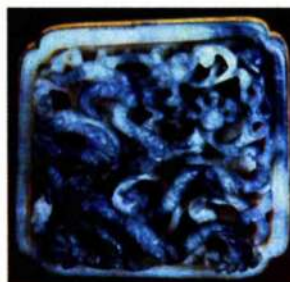


Fig. 6-10

Although these dragons are depicted on different media, they all bear characteristics of the Yuan fashion, such as distinctive mouth depiction and bold carving method.

The floral motif is often a popular design in inlay where the dragon is involved (Fig. 6-7 and Fig. 6-11). And in these two examples the peony is beautifully represented. The flowers are rendered in an extremely realistic style. Their petals, corollas, buds,

and leaves almost appear real to the touch, which enhances the sense of reality with respect to the dragon. The design of a dragon dancing among peonies is perhaps the reflection of Chinese influence on Yuan jade craftsmanship. In the Tang Dynasty, the



Fig. 6-11

peony was recognised as the queen of flowers (Ciyuan, 1992, p. 1983), and was a symbol of wealth, honour, and nobility. White peonies also evoke the idea of a beautiful and intelligent young girl (Brinker, et al, 1989, fig.83). As can be seen in Fig. 6-11, the peonies were carefully carved in the fairly light-coloured area, which enhanced the jade's perfection despite the "imperfect colour" of the

stone. The dragon also has its dancing body "highlighted" in light colour to reflect its shiny scales and flexible movements. The combined result is the portrayal of a romantic picture: the dragon, a king of the supernatural world, is now dancing with the peony, queen of the flowers.

In addition to the romantic story, there is another interpretation of the motif of dragon and peony. It involves a widely believed moral tenet. The word for dragon in Chinese in some southern accents, is pronounced *rong*, instead of *long* as in standard Mandarin, and, in standard Mandarin, the word *rong* 荣 signifies "flourishing" or "thriving". The Chinese word for flower, when pronounced in the rising tone, *hua*, instead of its proper flat tone, *hua* 花 can be taken as the character *hua* 华 which has the meaning "prosperous" or "luxurious". Once these two wrongly (from the point of view of the standard language) pronounced characters are put together, and taken as *rong hua* 荣华, the compound means "high position and great wealth" (instead of the correctly pronounced characters *long hua* 龙花, which mean "dragon and flower"). Thus this "happy mis-pronunciation" has given rise to the creation of an auspicious motif in Chinese art and literature. Alternatively, it might possibly be connected with the name of a tree in Buddhism, the "Dragon-florescence Tree" (*long-hua shu*, Sanskrit *naga-puspanaga*) (Cihai, 1989, pp. 1574-1576). In one sutra it is said that Maitreya Buddha (*mi-le-fo* 弥勒佛) will come to the earth as a Buddha Messiah at

the foot of this tree, that it will be his *Bodhi*-tree. The “dragon” refers to the writhing shape of the tree’s branches. The “Dragon-florescence Assemblies” (*long-hua hui* 龙花会) is the name given to Maitreya’s gatherings beneath this tree, at which he preached the Buddhist truths. A festival on the eighth day of the fourth month in the lunar calendar commemorates this, and, at the festival, Buddhist images are washed with scented water (Soothill, et al, 1995, p. 455). Either or both of these possible connections might be, the term *long hua* and its motif of the dragon and flowers have played a popular role in Chinese art. Their origin, especially when interfered with some confusing local dialects, does not seem to be so important.

6.2.2 Phoenix-among-flowers Inlays

The Phoenix-among-flowers motif was, like that of the Dragon-among-flowers, commonly found during the Yuan Dynasty. It is believed to have developed before the Song Dynasty (Zhou Nanquan, 1995, p. 159). Like the motif of the Dragon-among-flowers, this artistic motif flourished throughout the Yuan Dynasty. It is found in stone sculpture (No. 27), and in the Mongol canopy. Sometimes with some slight variation, the phoenix and peony can be seen with other motifs (also seen in these examples), such as those of a dragon, other birds, large flowers and whirl-shaped decorations. When the phoenix is placed together with the peony, they jointly and auspiciously symbolise a pairing of “the most beautiful things” in the world (Lee Yu-kuan, 1972, p. 371). Detailed Discussion of the nature of the phoenix will be found in Chapter Eight.

Jade inlay using the motif of the phoenix can be rendered extremely elegantly, in part owing to the superb poise of the bird. The example in Fig. 6-12 is one of the very rare and elegant pieces from the Qing Court Collection, Palace Museum, Beijing. It is a white jade with a touch of green and a small area of rusty yellow. It portrays a flying phoenix carved with splendid grace and delicacy. The whole piece is carved in open-work within a ring which frames the object.

This very finely carved and polished jade is almost too fine to be Mongol. Some have dated it to the Song period, which is well known for its fine craftsmanship (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 256). Other evidence shows, however, that a phoenix presented with great elegance and delicacy was not something exclusive to the Song. The phoenix on some Mongol fabrics of the Yuan period is also rendered with striking skill. There is a piece of woven material discovered in Liaoning Province (No. 57) which was in the collection of Zhu Zhanyan, a grandson of the first Ming emperor, Taizu, Zhu Yuanzhang (Huang Nengfu, 1987, p. 23). The collection is recorded as having consisted of products from the late Yuan period (Xu Bingkun, 1987, p. 10). The phoenix on this piece of material is very beautifully embroidered. Its head, neck, wings, body, legs and tails are all very skilfully depicted, and, in this respect, the jade phoenix (Fig. 6-12) closely resembles it in each detail. The woven bird has a sharp beak, long eye and beautiful feathers on its head. These features are almost identically reflected in the jade phoenix. The woven phoenix has a splendidly sinuous body, which is also almost identical to that of the jade phoenix. Another archaeological discovery from a Yuan tomb has provided evidence to demonstrate this point, being an elaborate silver mirror-stand with a pair of beautiful phoenixes carved in open-work on it (No. 58). The phoenix among the peony flowers in this piece portrays almost all the features shown in the jade phoenix with peony.



Fig. 6-12

These three phoenixes in different media clearly represent a more general capacity of manufacture during the Yuan Dynasty, and illustrate that technique, and craftsmanship were available to create very elegant and sophisticated carvings of the phoenix. Fig. 6-13



Fig. 6-13

is another example to further demonstrate this point. The irregular shape of this jade suggests that it was carved from a piece of jade cobble found in a river. In order to

make best use of the stone, the phoenix was carved in “high” relief, and stands out of the flowers instead of among them. On the back of this jade, the stone is flat and lacks any of the hooks conventionally found on plaques. In addition, the intricate delicacy and fragility of the piece suggests that it would have been securely inserted onto some form of support, and was viewed as a beautiful piece of inlay rather than having any other usage.

6.2.3 Morality Motifs



Fig. 6-14

It was a common practice during the Yuan period to depict something in art which represented a philosophical or moral concept (Tu Weiming, 1983, p. 58). Jade Fig. 6-14 is a good example of this kind. It is a white jade with some brownish marks, in a rectangular shape. A peacock (*Pavo muticus*) is depicted in open-work standing on a rock in the middle of the object. It is surrounded by four other birds: a pheasant (*Phasianus obscurus*), an egret (*Egretta ssp.*), a mandarin-duck (*Aix galericulata*) and, a falcon (*Falco*

ssp.). Around the birds, there are beautiful peonies in full bloom.

These five different birds portrayed together convey the moral concept of the Five Human Relationships (*Wu Lun* 五伦) of Chinese tradition and literature, these being that, “between father and son there should be affection; between ruler and minister there should be righteousness; between husband and wife there should be attention to their separate functions; between old and young there should be a proper order of seniority; between friends there should be trustworthiness.” (Zhou Nanquan, 1987, p. 16). The concept advocates a smooth and harmonious moral quality for these relationships. In the original Chinese version of the artistic motif, the birds are a peacock or phoenix, a pheasant, an egret or a crane (*Niltava ssp.* or *Grus chinensis*), a Mandarin-duck and a warbler (*Tesia ssp.*). The peacock or phoenix is thought of as the king of the birds; the pheasant has beautiful feathers; the egret or crane sings and

is mild in temper; the mandarin-duck stays with its mate forever and the warbler chants pleasantly (Zhou Nanquan, 1987, p. 16). The precise combination of birds may sometimes vary, as in different areas of China, or simply because of differences in the taste of individual artisans. An example is jade Fig. 6-14, which is a combination that includes a falcon. The falcon strongly suggests its Mongol origin, as discussed in some detail in Chapter Five above. The very thought of inserting a bird of prey is contrary to the concept of harmony. The piece has even been described as a Song jade, despite the obvious presence of the falcon (Zhou Nanquan, 1987, no. 79). A closer examination, however, indicates strong evidence of Yuan imperial court craftsmanship. The leaves, for example, are very boldly carved, with wide, deep cuts representing their mid-ribs. The petals of the flowers are forcefully depicted to show their strong but also supple character. Similar characteristics can be found in Fig. 5-1b which was excavated from the tomb of Qian Yu of the Yuan Dynasty.

At the rear of jade Fig. 6-14, the surface is flat and unpolished with no holes are drilled in it. This suggests that this jade object could have been inserted into something as a piece of inlay. There is, however, a very obvious hole drilled through the falcon's body. Technically, it would have been very easy to make one or more concealed holes on this jade, as demonstrated by many others, more complicated Yuan jades. The presence of this somewhat peculiarly located hole may be another indication of the bold and unconstrained style of Mongol craftsmanship.

6.3 Summary

It is important to note that, compared to other types of Yuan jades, not a large number of scholarly jade objects have been found. Furthermore, almost every one of the jades in this chapter raises more questions and suggestions than answers about its precise function. The Mongols, as warriors from a nation of hunters, had much to learn about being intellectual city-dwellers during their very short-lived Dynasty. Although archaeological discoveries have revealed evidence of cultural life in the Yuan court, other studies have demonstrated that the strongest Mongol influence

during the Yuan Dynasty did not come from the imperial court's scholarly aspects. The creation of scholarly jades constituted only a part of the court's cultural life. There were other dimensions, and the following chapter will reveal the greater significance of Yuan jades when they were used for costume decoration. The Mongols were much more fine costume-decorators than scholarly connoisseurs.

As hunters and breeders of horses, the Mongols required no more goods than could easily be transported from one encampment to the next (Bosson, 1995, p. 22). For this reason, decorative household-objects and scholarly objects made of jade did not comprise a major part of the Mongols' jade possessions, even after the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty. Life in the Yuan court for the traditional Mongol khans and their nobles remained less settled and sedentary than that of other city-dwellers (Shi Weimin, 1996b, p. 24). For example, in the Yuan court in Dadu, in addition to the glorious palace, the Mongol emperors set up their traditional tents or encampments outside the buildings of Dadu, with more of them pitched along the way to the Mongols' old capital, Karakorum. (Ye Ziqi, 1516, p. 62). Their preferred way of living was still to dwell in tents, and to move around frequently, taking part in seasonal hunting.

Nevertheless, jade articles such as scholarly objects and inlays, now found mostly in the Imperial Collection of the Palace Museum, include examples of very fine craftsmanship from the Yuan imperial court. Although the idea of using paperweights, arm-rests, ink-beds and inlays was largely Chinese in origin, and the objects do show a strong Chinese influence, such as seen in Fig. 6-14, and could have well been made by Chinese craftsmen, these objects were greatly appreciated in the Yuan court. Some Mongol nobles and the Mongol emperors' non-Chinese ministers were extremely interested in Chinese culture. The Khitan man Yelü Chucai, for example, a chancellor under a Mongol khan, is recorded in *History of the Yuan* as an example of one of these intelligent and educated ministers (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 3455). He is described as a wise man, able to read and write, and extremely knowledgeable in astronomy, geography, history, mathematics, religion and

medicine. One can easily imagine that the educated Mongols and other non-Chinese ministers in the imperial court, such as Yelü Chucai, would have, indeed must have, used scholarly objects, to facilitate their studies and work, in an intellectual environment.

Lastly, it should be stressed that some of the scholarly or decorative jade objects in this thesis could have been used interchangeably for some other function. Jades with a hunting motif may have fallen into this dual-function group. Indeed the dual function could be considered one of the characteristics of Yuan jades, one which other dynasties don't seem to exhibit so dramatically. The Mongols particularly needed to have decorations and adornments which were as convenient for them on the move as when settled.

CHAPTER SEVEN: JADE ANIMALS IN THE COSTUME AND CUSTOMARY ADORNMENTS OF THE YUAN DYNASTY

The Mongols national costume is a robe-like garment called in Mongol a *del* (Bartholomew, 1995b, p. 84). It is very simple in cut, but rich in colours and decoration. It has no pockets, and is worn with a sash several yards long wound tightly around the waist. Attached to the sash are essential objects, such as a set of eating utensils, a tinder-pouch and tobacco, and pipe-pouches (Bartholomew, 1995b, p. 84). During the Yuan period, the sash was made of satin in bright colours, such as yellow, orange, purple or green. Another version of the sash, a belt made of leather, was also made in various colours, but was more convenient for hanging accessories and ornaments on (Wuyun Bilige, et al, 1993, p. 449). The tradition of wearing leather belts, in which there are a number of accessories, hung on the belt around the waist existed long before the Mongol times (Chen Xiasheng, 1984, p. 4). The Mongols probably copied the idea of the leather belt when settled in Beijing, together with their own tradition of the sash, there was then a huge rise in demand among the nobles for luxury goods, such as utensils, jewellery and other objects made of jade, gold, pearl and other precious materials (Huang Nanfu, et al, 1995, p. 265).

After the Mongol rulers moved to Dadu and established the Yuan capital there, the demand for luxury goods grew ever more urgent. The imperial Manufactories Commission (*Jiang zuo yuan* 匠作院), the largest artisan agency, ranked as high as the second grade in the imperial court, and responsible for the production of such goods, expanded rapidly (Jing Anning, 1994, p. 48). Apart from the common practice of individuals' wearing several jades (No. 83), the daily utilisation of jades in the Yuan imperial court, as recorded in *History of the Yuan*, is astonishing. The following is a small fraction of the jade ornaments, in addition to the gold and other precious materials, that the Yuan emperor wore in his state ceremonies: 6 jade rings, 2 jade hairpins, 6 jade discs, 2 jade ornaments in the shape of a half-moon, 2 jade beads, 7 jade geese, 2 jade belt-ends and 2 jade dragon-ornaments, in total 29 jades for the emperor for one sole occasion (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 1930-1934). The

formal garments of the princes were also covered with jade: 12 jade ornaments, including jade rings and belt-plaques, and jade decorations of sword-guards. The imperial carriage of the emperor was likewise covered with rich jade adornments: its ceiling was of one whole piece of jade depicting a dragon carved in relief; around its roof there were 8 jade ornaments; on its railing (*gou lan* 勾栏) there were 10 jade flying-dragons and 10 sitting-dragons in relief; its shafts bore 3 *chi* dragons carved in jade; the horizontal board of its roof bore jade written inscriptions; and inside the carriage, there was a chair decorated with a jade dragon playing with a flaming pearl. These jades present only a very brief surface hint as to how many jades were required in the Yuan court, with many other nobles and imperial officials also needing jades to proclaim their rankings, or merely to adorn themselves.

These various jade ornaments can be divided into two groups. The first group includes those jades with practical functions, such as seals, hooks and buckles. They are referred to as Ornaments of Usage (*shi pei* 事佩) (Zhou Xun, et al, 1995, p. 376). The second group of jades were for decoration with a moral sense. They are called Ornaments of Morality (*de pei* 德佩). Taken together, these Ornaments of Usage or Morality were also simply called Jade Ornaments (*yu pei* 玉佩). In fact, many jade objects have dual functions of both a practical usage and a decorative or moralistic role. The jade belt-ornament in Fig. 7-18, for example, serves to convey a harmony among animals in spring. The two dragons in another example, in Fig. 7-23, are a depiction, in the form of a belt-hook, displaying and proclaiming the moralistic notion of the adult teaching its young.

This chapter will conduct an intensive discussion on jade ornaments, arranged according to their practical function, and paying attention to the significance of their individual applied application.

7.1 JADE BELT-PLAQUES

Although the sash was the original fashion of the Mongol costume, the leather belt apparently came to be much more in favour in the Yuan court because it could be decorated more easily than the sash. Jade or gold belt-hooks, belt-rings, belt-plaques, belt-tips, belt-toggles and endless other kinds of item invented using these substances were much esteemed (Yang Boda, 1993, p. 17), not only for their beauty, but also as signs of rank. In the Yuan court, permission to use jade belt-decorations was confined exclusively to the first-grade officials, while the second and third grades were permitted the second class of material, gold (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1939).

Apart from one jade belt-plaque known from an unpublished archaeological excavation (Fig. 7-13), all other jade plaques are heirlooms from the Imperial Collections of Beijing Palace Museum and Taiwan National Palace Museum, and from various private collectors. There are altogether two sets of Yuan jade belt-plaques that have unearthed in China. One is from the tomb of Fan Wenhui, and the other is from the tomb of Zhang Shicheng's parents, but they are all plain, without any patterns on them. It is, however, recorded that the jade belt-plaques in the Yuan court were "either plain or patterned" (Song Lian, et al, 1370 p.1939). We can only hope that more archaeological excavation in the future will discover more physical evidence.

There are three major motifs used in jade belt-decorations found in the Imperial Collections: the dragon, the lion, and birds in a floral setting.

7.1.1 Dragons

Under the Yuan law, the dragon motif was exclusively for the use of the emperor (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1936). Jade dragons would not have been in the possession of anyone other than the Yuan emperors, all of whom were buried in secret, probably with many of their belongings. It is very likely for this reason that there are not many

jade dragons found in the collections of Yuan jade, a situation clearly deriving from the lack of archaeological excavations and thus of any evidence from such. There are, however, two jades of dragon-type creatures found in the Imperial Collection in the



Fig. 7-1

Palace Museum (Fig. 7-1 and Fig. 7-2). Strictly speaking, they are not dragons proper. But they certainly bear strong characteristics of the Yuan depiction of that supernatural of imperial power.



Fig. 7-2

The jade belt-plaque in Fig. 7-1 is a *chi* dragon set in relief. It is a beautiful white jade with all the fine qualities of Khotan mutton-fat stone, having a semi-translucent and moist appearance. The animal depicted on this jade has a head in the shape of a triangle with a very small face almost “set within”. Its mouth is hardly visible, if indeed it is depicted. Its smoothly polished body is sparsely decorated with some flames.

There are two rectangle-shaped loops at the back of the plaque, for inserting a belt through. This way of making jade-plaques has been considered one the typical Yuan styles (Yang Jie, 1993a, p. 280). It is markedly different from jade belt-plaques of Tang or Ming style, which were often made with sort of ant-antennae holes at the back of the jade.

Bearing an obviously very different kind of depiction, the jade plaque shown in Fig. 7-2 presents a dragon with wings, scaled body and fish-tail that are all stylised. This dragon, with fish-body and bird-wings, is described and explained in *Classic of Hills and Rivers* : “Dragon-fish of the north of the country. It lives in the waters and mountains. Its shape is like that of carp. The saint of its kind, as so supernatural that it can fly” (*Shan Hai Jing*, Zhou Dynasty, p. 260). The earliest known surviving case of a dragon with scaled body dancing in water is believed to be that depicted on some pottery tiles made in the Tang Dynasty (Zeng Tuo, 1984, p. 34). It has a fish-body and two feathered wings and was excavated in 1982 in Jiangsu Province. It is on a

silver plate dated to the Tang Dynasty, the plate having a fish-bodied dragon engraved on the bottom of it (No. 59). The creature on the plate is an imaginary animal, with the mixture of dragon head, fish body and bird wings.

The fish-dragon is held to have the power of transforming itself from a fish, usually a carp, into the form of a dragon (Nott, 1962, p. 67). A Chinese legend tells the story that every spring numerous carps gather at the dragon gate set between two steep mountain cliffs, a gate allegedly built by the Great Emperor Yu (Song Houmei, 1995, p. 10). Carp that succeed in jumping over the dragon gate are then metamorphosed into dragons. The rest of the carp, those which have failed, return to continue being just ordinary fish, and wait to try again the next spring. This legend is the basis of an idiom, “to leap the dragon gate”, which allegorically means “to reach a superior status” and “to pass the examinations into officialdom”. The fish-dragon, as with the



Fig. 7-3

one shown in Fig. 7-2 and Fig. 7-3, has a dragon head, scaled body, fish tail and feathered-wings. These features have been used throughout history to depict the fish-dragon (Fig. 7-3). In the collection of the Seattle Art Museum there is found a fish-dragon, which is a most exquisitely carved and finely polished object, probably dating to recent centuries. It is a good example of this enduring motif.



Fig. 7-4

Sadly, yet also fortunately, there is only one dragon plaque proper that can be placed under this sub-title (Fig. 7-4). It is a tablet in the shape of a flower with eight petals. In the middle of the plaque, there is a

dragon with all the qualities of dragons of the early Yuan times. Its mouth is open, with its upper lip slightly longer than the lower one. It has a long flying-mane and smooth body. This petal-shape of the belt-plaque is indeed unusual, but not unknown. Fig. 7-20, for example also shows an eight-petal-shaped belt-plaque, as

well as other unusual-shaped tablets, such as the ones in Fig. 7-21 and Fig. 7-22 (Catalogue of Jade), although these do not employ the dragon motif.

7.1.2 Lions



Fig. 7-5

A lion on a belt-plaque is one of the most popular motifs, there being so many surviving examples. It is commonly rendered in the form of a man dancing with a lion (Fig. 7-5). This motif is believed to have come into favour shortly after the Han Dynasty (Zhou Nanquan, 1987, p. 19). The lion has always been very closely linked with Buddhism, for which

reason it became an emblem of Buddha. The stylised lion is familiar from its sculptured images, which are found, situated very conspicuously, in pairs in front of imperial gates and palaces, as well as at the graves of important people. They perform the duty of guardians against all kinds of evil. All of these representations of lions seem to have been brought in after the arrival of Buddhism (Ball, 1969, p. 53). During the Yuan Dynasty, although China was a Mongol-centred country, it was a multi-national one, and accommodated many religions and traditions (Paludan, 1998, p. 149). The Buddhist religion was influential, but, as other religions and creeds also were, the lion seems to have been not only a Buddhist emblem, but also, in a more general sense, something of a playful animal, often shown playing with its Mongol partner.

The jade illustrated in Fig. 7-5 is a typical image of this kind. It is a greenish white jade belt-plaque with the motif of a man playing with a lion amid pine and oak trees, carved in open-work. The lion has a curly mane, a fairly square face, a strong body and a bushy tail. Both the lion and the man are rendered in quite a naturalistic

manner, which was the fashion of the time, and can be seen on almost every other belt-plaque with a lion mentioned under this sub-title, as for instance in Fig. 7-10.¹ These same characteristics are also found in a number of Yuan stone sculptures, such as one in a temple in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia (No. 60). The temple was built during the 14th century (Zhao Changshun, 1998, Interview). Among several sculptures found in the temple, this lion is one of the best-preserved creatures. It has a heavy, curly mane coloured green. Its face is fairly large, with a wide, flat, square-edged mouth. The animal has a sturdy body and strong legs, with a very bushy tail.

The lion-handler depicted in Fig. 7-5 is dressed in a Mongolian long gown with narrow sleeves. On his head, he is wearing a hat with a furred brim, this kind of hat being called “warm hat” (Huang Nengfu, et al, 1995, p. 245). In his right hand, he is holding a flaming pearl with a long tongue of fire to it, and in his left hand, he holds the long ribbon used to control the ball and guide the lion.

A ball placed under the feet of the lion is intricately pierced with the pattern of a stylised peony flower. The peony in Chinese art is one of the most common auspicious motifs, symbolising wealth, honour and nobility (Brinker, 1989, pl. 83). The motif of the peony ball, sometimes seen in the design on the ancient Chinese coin (*tong qian* 铜钱), there implying wealth and material riches, together with the dancing lion and man, can be found throughout Chinese history. Often it contains a lion leaping in an excited manner in an endeavour to seize the ball, which is guided in front of it, in a tantalising way, by the man.

What is distinctive about the jade illustrated in Fig. 7-5 is its decorative background of brocade in open-work. The latter is well known as a feature of the splendour of Ming jades (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, Interview). This style can also, however, be seen in lacquerware made during the Yuan period, for example as in No. 61. The brocade ground on this lacquer box closely resembles that on the Yuan jade object

¹ The jade illustrated Fig.7-10 is found in a private collection. It is recognised as imperial treasure, even though it is not in the imperial collection. (Zhang Guangwen, 1998, Interview).

shown in Fig. 7-5. This evidence strongly suggests that there were jades with a brocade background that were made before the Ming Dynasty. This jade object silently demonstrates its Mongolian identity by the figure of the man dressed in Mongol costume. What is more, this is not an isolated specimen. Another example dated to the Yuan period has been found in a private collection in Taiwan (Fig. 7-6). This is a light-green-coloured jade of an inferior quality to the previous example (Fig. 7-5). The lion is gyrating beautifully, jumping to try and catch the ball in the air. Its heavy mane and bushy tail are in the same fashion as that of the previously mentioned jade lion. The man, again, is wearing a long gown with a belt around his waist, and his hat is probably the



Fig. 7-6

“warm hat”, its brim being fairly wide. He is wearing the pair of boots, which is almost always part of the Mongols’ costume (Huang Nengfu, et al, 1995, p. 240). The gorgeous brocade background is carved in elegant open-work, and makes the piece look lithe and feel graceful.

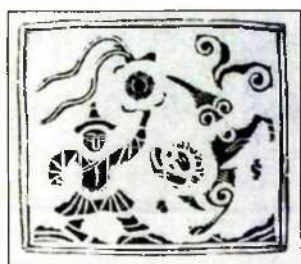


Fig. 7-7

The image of the man in lion-and-man motif can be an important indicator for the dating of the Yuan jade, the clues mostly deriving from his clothing and his hat. In the Imperial Collection, there is a jade rubbing of a man whose hat has a long structure on top of it (Fig. 7-7). In Fig. 7-8, a similarly long structure can be seen on the man’s hat. Research into Mongol costume provides a likely explanation. One of the outfits worn by Mongol officials of the Yuan



Fig. 7-8

period included a long feather on top of the hat, as seen in No. 62. With this explanation of the man’s hat, the jade shown in Fig. 7-10 can be properly understood. The motif and layout of the both jades (Fig. 7-9 & Fig. 7-10) are very similar.

Indeed the lion-and-man motifs are depicted in a fairly uniform way, with only slight variations. Two jades found in the Palace Museum demonstrate this point, although they are only available for illustration here as rubbings (Fig. 7-11 and Fig. 7-12). The jade shown in Fig. 7-11 is of a man in the typical Mongolian long gown and fur-brimmed hat. He is guiding a lion which has a large head, strong body and bushy tail, with a ball bearing the design of a Chinese coin. The jade shown in Fig. 7-12 is different in that the coin-design ball which the man is holding is attached to a ribbon, which in turn is attached to a long pole. The lion, instead of leaping to catch the ball, is walking in front of the man with its head turned back over its left shoulder. The animal has a large head with a curly mane, a slightly decorated body and metatarsal joints with whirlpool-shaped curls, and a bushy tail.



Fig. 7-10



Fig. 7-11



Fig. 7-12

Some differences can be found in the way that the lions on the jade belt-plaques were depicted during the Yuan times. In contrast to the above-mentioned ones with curly mane and bushy tail, not all are of the same type. The jade illustrated in Fig. 7-13

shows only a lion playing with the ball. The lion's mane frames its head somewhat like a hair-style now popular with young girls. The animal has a lean body and a realistically depicted tail. Its face appears to bear a closer resemblance to that of a human, rather than that of a lion, and thus "matches" the hairstyle. The ball that the animal is playing with has a delicately ancient Chinese coin design, and a long ribbon attached to it.

Although it was not the most common fashion, other Yuan lions in jade were also featured with a human-like face, and with a hair-like mane draping over their

shoulders, (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 219). There is said to be a handful of human-faced jade lions from Yuan times collected in the Palace Museum (Zhou Nanquan,

1999, Interview). Sadly, however, they have never been officially shown to the public either in publication or in exhibition. The jade belt-plaque shown in Fig. 7-13 belonged to Chen Youliang who was a general of the Yuan Dynasty in Southern China during the year 1362. He was shot dead and his army completely defeated by Zhu Yuanzhang, who established the Ming Dynasty and became its first Emperor in



Fig. 7-13

1368 (Mao Peiqi, et al, 1995, p. 16). This jade is the only human-faced lion of Yuan times which has been excavated (Zhou Nanquan, 1999, Interview). As a consequence, it has been employed to date and identify a number of other jades of a similar kind.

Finally, there is a considerable number of jade lions in a realistic style which depict the animal as in real life. The jade lion in Fig. 7-14, for instance, has a heavy mane, like that often found in the wild. And its body is lean, which is also typical of the lion in real life. A man dressed in a Mongolian gown and a fur-brimmed hat is walking beside the lion. The background is intricately carved with brocade just like that in Fig. 7-6. The jade plaque also depicts some beautifully carved pine needles. They look a bit like gear-wheels, and a similar style of depiction can be found in some woodblock prints of Yuan times (No. 63). The jade plaque (Fig. 7-14) has a wooden frame, which is said to have been made in an imperial court workshop during a later dynasty, probably to turn it into a piece of inlay (Zhou Nanquan, 1999, Interview). Note that there is a hole drilled through the lion's left rump. This is clear evidence that the jade object was originally made as a belt-plaque, or as a piece of flat jade to be hung from the belt, rather than as an object to be framed.



Fig. 7-14



Fig. 7-15

The jade rubbing of a lion shown in Fig. 7-15 is a better representation than the lion shown in Fig. 7-14. The former animal appears to be more real with its mane, body and tail depicted very realistically. The very deep and wide cuts around the lion's face and four limbs are one of the Mongols' most distinctive carving styles (Chapter Five). The man standing behind the lion is holding a long pole with a ball at its end, somewhat like the pole in Fig. 7-12. He is wearing a kind of hat with a sideways extended flock on his head. During the Yuan Dynasty it was common for both the Chinese and the Mongols to wear this type of hat, which was called *pu tou* 璞头, or *mo er* 抹额 or *ke nao* 磕脑 (No. 64) (Namu Jila, 1995, p. 54). The hat was, in fact, a traditional one, worn in China since the Tang Dynasty. In *History of the Yuan*, it is clearly recorded that, "the *pu tou* (璞头) is made according to the Tang fashion" (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1939).



Fig. 7-16

The most realistic style of lion in this chapter is depicted in Fig. 7-16. It is a male lion with a heavy mane. His eyebrows and the two deep cuts along his cheeks, representing his mouth, make this animal look very fearsome. His body is depicted as lean, and his rump as powerfully

muscled. The animal's dorsal line, abdominal wall and tail are depicted with short lines to represent his fur. If we compare it with the form of a real-life lion, we find that this figure is made with almost anatomical accuracy (No. 65). The lion of the real life model could well be the Asiatic lion. The male lion has moderate mane grow, so that its ears are always visible (Nowell, et al, 1996, p. 37). The artisan who produced this jade object could well have carved this jade lion following observation of a real lion which served as his model.

Similarly, there is a rubbing derived from a jade in the Imperial Collection (Fig. 7-17), which shows a man in the Mongolian gown, holding a ball and guiding a lion. The animal is no less realistic than that in Fig. 7-16. What is striking, is that the face of the jade lion closely resembles that on a tile-end excavated from the ruins of Yuan

Dynasty Dadu (No. 66). The lion, just a head on the tile-end, likewise has a pair of staring eyes, a round jaw, raised ears and a straight nose.

Each of the jade belt-plaques discussed above is made with loops at the back of it for putting a belt through, with the exception of the one illustrated in Fig. 7-14, which

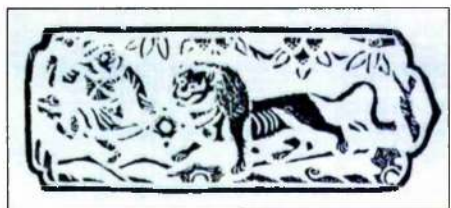


Fig. 7-17

has a hole drilled through the lion's body, probably for hanging the jade as a pendant. A jade-decorated belt unearthed in Jilin Province, from a tomb dated to the Jin Dynasty, has holes drilled in the four corners of all of its jade plaques (No. 67). This style

does not seem to be reflected at all in the illustrations of Yuan jade belt-plaques collected in this thesis, and this difference suggests a possible way of differentiating between the jade belt-plaques of the Jin Dynasty and those of the Yuan Dynasty.

7.1.3 Animals in Flora

Animals set among plant is one of the most popular motifs in art. There have been a number of examples of jade objects with this motif in previous chapters. Most commonly, deer and one or more cranes, sometimes with a tortoise, are placed in a pine forest, in a motif termed Crane

and Deer in Spring (*he lu tong chun* 鹤鹿同春). Both the deer and the crane are symbols of Taoism, and represent longevity and superhuman wisdom (Brinker, 1989, pl. 76). The tortoise is seen as an animal, which has a very long life. The pine tree is an evergreen plant. When all of these elements are taken together, they symbolise longevity or everlasting life.

The jade belt-plaque illustrated in Fig. 7-18, from the Qing Court Collection, is a beautiful specimen of this kind. It is a greenish jade, bearing some dark brown marks,

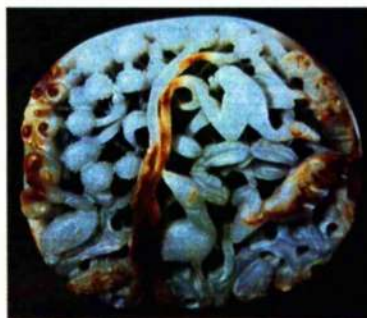


Fig. 7-18

carved in open-work, with a multi-interlayered treatment.² A crane is flying in the sky, and two deer are standing placidly under a pine tree. A tortoise is in a quiet corner on the lower left of the piece. On the back of the jade is a pair of ring-shaped loops.

This jade belt-plaque is very intricately carved. The “imperfect” dark marks of the jade-skin have been cleverly employed to depict the pine’s trunk and its leaves. This was a popular method employed during the Yuan period to make colourful “jade pictures” (Yang Boda, 1998, In terview). A similar style and method were used in the creation of another jade belt-plaque, which has been unearthed from a Yuan tomb (Fig. 7-19). Although this jade is unavoidably corroded and slightly discoloured on its surface, owing to its long burial, the notion of longevity is still clearly conveyed, by the combination of a crane flying elegantly in the sky, with its long legs stretched out behind it, a deer standing under the leaves of the pine and in a bamboo forest, a tortoise quietly tucked away in the corner, and some *lingzhi* clouds. The whole scene portrays the



Fig. 7-19

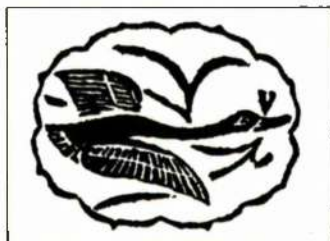


Fig. 7-20

symbolism of immortality. The crane and deer are set in relief against a background of tree-branches and pine needles. The bamboo leaves form a semi-layer between the pine-tree branches and the *lingzhi* clouds. The combined consequence is a striking three-dimensional effect on the “flat” surface of the plaque.

The posture of the crane, with its neck bent and head turned back, seems to have been a common way of depicting large birds in Yuan jades. Another bird, which is

² The term multi-interlaced treatment means that no clearly defined boundaries can be found between each layer. The effect is that each element of the design is depicted as interwoven with the others.

like a swan (note the absence of long trailing legs), in jade, is shown in Fig. 7-22.³ Its body, head and neck have been depicted in almost exactly the same way as those of the bird in Fig. 7-19. The swan is flying among stylised clouds, with its neck turned back and to its left, instead of to the right as with the crane. These two birds are almost mirror images of one another as regards posture.

Birds are lovely and lively creatures, especially when depicted in a setting together with plants to proclaim the beauty of Nature. The jade belt-plaque seen in Fig. 7-20 shows an elegant swan in flight, with a twig in its beak. This is a familiar scene in the



Fig. 7-21



Fig. 7-48

Spring Water jades, as is seen in Fig. 5-17, and the same motif can be found on Yuan ceramics, such as that in No. 68. The jade plaque (Fig. 7-20) is oval in shape, with its outer edge cut in the design of a beautiful eight-petalled flower. In this, it shares a similarity with the jade illustrated in Fig. 7-4, which is also made with an eight-petalled flower design, but this time the flower is in the form of a complete circle.

The motif of the jade shown in Fig. 7-20, and also of that shown in Fig. 7-21, both show the strong influence of the Spring Water theme - the swan with water plants. They could both equally well, it might be considered, have been used as two further examples to add to the Spring Water jades featured in Chapter Five. The reason that they are discussed in this chapter is that they both are clearly belt-plaques with loops on the back of them. This slight difference separates them from the Spring Water ornaments, some of which are not necessarily plaques, but perform some other

³ The jade in Fig. 7-22a and Fig. 7-22b (see Catalogue of Jade) could possibly be categorised as a jade of Spring Water. The motif of the swan alone among *lingzhi* clouds, however, is not a common scene in the Spring Water Jades, and embodies a slight feeling of unreality, expressed by the magical clouds. The motif does, however, show some of the influence from the Spring Water motif on the making of belt-plaques.

functions. These two jade swans are no doubt an employment of the Spring Water motif to make decorated belts. For exactly the same reason, the jade shown in Fig. 7-48, using the same Spring Water motif is listed under the sub-title “Jade ring-shaped ornaments”. It is a flying swan, depicted on a ring, with a pair of loops on the back of the ring.

7.2 JADE BELT-BUCKLES

Archaeological evidence in China shows that jade belt-buckles were in use as early as 5000 years ago (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, p. 71). The tradition of wearing jade buckles continued until the Qing Dynasty. The belt-buckle was a simple gadget to fasten the belt, as indicated in No. 32. During the Yuan Dynasty, jade buckles were decorated with animal and floral motifs of all kinds. A number of splendid jade objects which may have been buckles were discussed in Chapter Five. In this chapter, stress will be laid on the various forms of jade buckles, as well as their decorative motifs.



Fig. 7-23



Fig. 7-24

Like many of the jade objects discussed above, jade buckles were also made to express ideological notions, rather than as works of art. The jade buckle excavated from Xi'an City in 1976 (Fig. 7-23) for example, carries the moral message of “the dragon teaching its young” (*Canglong jiaozi* 苍龙教子) (Tang Yunmo, Yuan Dynasty, p. 541). It is a

white jade belt-hook, in the shape of the *pipa* 琵琶, a Chinese plucked-string musical instrument with a fretted fingerboard. A large dragon head forms the head of the hook. On its shank, there is a small *chi* dragon set in relief, with a *lingzhi* in its mouth and around it as a background. The small *chi* dragon is facing the large dragon, and

appears to be “listening” to it, hence the name of the motif. The same motif appears on another jade buckle (Fig. 7-24). It is slightly different in shape, in that it is a bit narrower of waist than the one in Fig. 7-23. Its hook is formed from a large *chi* dragon with a pair of horns in the shape of the Chinese character *ren* 人 (person). This is reckoned to be one the most distinctive characteristics of the Yuan dragon when it appears on a hook and enables it to be found among the hundreds of jade hooks in the Imperial Collection (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, p. 75). On the shank of the buckle, there is a small *chi* dragon, carved in the same posture as the small *chi* dragon in Fig. 7-23, “listening” to the large dragon. Again somewhat different in form, but the same in motif, there is a third dragon buckle (Fig. 7-25), in which the hook is in the shape of the *pipa*. Its head is a slightly stylised dragon, with a pair of horns in the form of the Chinese character *ren* 人. On its shank, lotus flowers are



Fig. 7-25

depicted instead of the small dragon seen in the previous two jades, being carved in a large area of dark colour formed from the jade-skin. Strikingly, a dragon is set almost in the round on the ring into which the hook



Fig. 7-26

buckles. the dragon is depicted in a bold and strong manner to convey its vigorous movement.

These three jade buckles, although of different provenance, display the same

motif in different ways. Each of them has a button at the back to hold the belt.

The demand for jade belt-buckles was such that it seriously stretched the imaginations of the finest craftsmanship to their widest during the Yuan period. The ruler demanded the most intricate ornaments, and artisans employed their most innovative skills to meet the imperial requirements. For example, the jade buckle in Fig. 7-26, found in the Imperial Collection, is unique in elegance. It is a set of three separate but interlinked divided pieces, which together look like two square pieces of

jade, and are connected by a thumb ring-shaped joint in between them to link them together. There is a *chi* dragon in the right square of the jade, with a *lingzhi* in its mouth, both in relief. The other *chi* dragon, carved in relief in the left jade square, has a hole in the middle of it, one large enough to make this piece almost a ring. At the back of both square-shaped pieces, there are two loops large enough to put a belt through. The two *chi* dragons on this object are large-headed with small faces. Their mouths can hardly be seen. They have supple bodies and stylised tails with two whirl-shaped ends. These are characteristics of the *chi* dragon which appear repeatedly in Yuan jades.

7.3 Jade Belt-tips

The belt-tip is another type of ornament, recognised as characteristic of, and employed in, the Yuan court. Archaeological evidence has presented us with evidence of how a jade belt-tip was used. The object in No. 67 is a leather belt recovered in Jilin Province from a tomb dated to the Jin Dynasty (Yang Boda, 1993a, p. 271). The belt has a gold buckle and tongue. It is covered all over with rectangular jades plaques, each of which has holes in its four corners, by means of which it is attached to the belt, with gold thread. On the belt-tip, there is a jade plaque which is shaped slightly differently from the other jade plaques. It is almost, but not quite,



Fig. 7-27

rectangular. One of its ends is slightly curved. A jade plaque has been selected here (Fig. 7-27) to demonstrate this characteristic. This jade plaque, by its “odd” shape, indicates that its function is to cover the end of a belt, and it is called a “belt-tip”. The plaque is decorated with a bird (probably a crane) and a tortoise under some *lingzhi*-shaped clouds. This motif has been discussed earlier above, and symbolises longevity and good fortune. The slightly curved end is in the shape of a petal. As the last piece of the belt-plaques, it was probably to provide a decorative “finish” to the belt. Note

that there is a small hole drilled through one of the clouds, near the right side of the object. This is probably for putting a thread through to attach the plaque to a belt end. The less than artistic way of drilling a hole right through the jade, regardless of any patterns on the piece, as in the jade shown in Fig. 6-14a and discussed in Chapter Six, is rarely found in jades made during dynasties other than the Yuan.

There is another type of jade belt-tip in this collection that is strikingly different in appearance (Fig. 7-28). It is categorised as a *cha wei* 捶尾 (also pronounced *Tuo Wei* sometimes) in Chinese, and was only for the use of officials of high ranking (Chen Xiasheng, 1984, p. 4). A drawing (Nos. 69 & 70) shows how it looked when in use. It was used for a belt with two belt-tips, which was derived from a costume worn in the Song imperial court (Chen Xiasheng, 1984, p. 4). Jade tip-plaques sometimes have belt-loops at the back of them, or may have holes drilled in their corners.



Fig. 7-28

In *New History of the Tang*, the official history of the Tang Dynasty, it is noted:

腰带者，垂头于下，名曰捶尾。(Ouyang Xiu, et al., 1060, p. 527)

A belt-tip, which lowers its head, is call *cha wei*. It means smooth and without a hitch.

This record indicates that *cha wei* was not just another kind of belt-tip. The belt-tip had to be able to droop, as shown in Nos. 69 & 70. The ordinary belt-tip was in landscape format, while the *cha wei* was in portrait layout. A jade *cha wei* from the Qing court collection demonstrates this feature very well (Fig. 7-28). It is a very dark jade belt-tip, with a dragon frolicking in the sea. The dragon is in low relief. The top of the jade is straight, and the lower edge is slightly flanged. At the rear of the object, there are four pairs of tunnelled holds at each of the four corners, with which to

attach the belt. This jade belt-tip, with the dragon motif, could well have been used by nobles in the Yuan court, if not indeed by the emperor himself.

7.4 JADE PENDANTS

The belt did not merely indicate ranking. The absence of pockets in the Mongol robe made the belt functionally important in another, practical way. It had to be able to carry things around on it. Archaeological evidence shows that jade pendants are divided into two types. One pendant type had both ornamental and practical functions, and the second type was purely decorative.

7.4.1 Jade Pendants with Dual Functions



Fig. 7-29

An example of the first type of pendant is illustrated in Fig. 7-29. It is a beautiful jade engraving of a *chi* dragon with a large-head, small face, long mane and vigorous body. The two little

rings attached to the pendant are not of the same size and shape. This is a rare arrangement, and has been interpreted as follows: one ring is for attaching the pendant to a belt, and the other for suspending other objects from for further decoration (Wuxi Municipal Museum, 1964, p. 52).⁴



Fig. 7-30

⁴ This jade ornament was excavated from a tomb in April, 1960, from Qian Yu tomb, Wu Xi city, Jian Su Province, China (Wuxi Municipality Museum, 1964, p. 52). The tomb was discovered 17 kilometers south to the Wuxi City when a reservoir there was being built. On the tomb stone, it understood: "Xian Yu, from Wuxi, born in 1247, passed away in 1320 and buried in 1321." (Xu Lin, 1998, p1). In this Yuan tomb, there are 19 jade objects in which 5 of them are jade animals plus an agate monkey.

Another jade pendant with a similar function comes from the Qing Court Collection (Fig. 7-30). It is a lot heavier and green in colour with brown marks. It is decorated with a winged dragon, its scales set in low relief, above sea waves. The jade is almost rectangular in shape, with its top edge flanged a little.



Fig. 7-31

It is reported that, at the back of this jade, a pair of belt-loops is vertically arranged along the long sides of the piece (Zhou Nanquan, 1995, p. 166). Uniquely, there is a ring at the base of the object. Beyond doubt, this jade plaque was made not only as a belt decoration, but also to enable more things to be hung from its ring.

Further archaeological and historical research may yield evidence to help analyse exactly how jade pendants with a ring attached were used. It is, however, already clear, from the results of a small number of archaeological excavations, and from the style of carving used on the animals or plants depicted on these jades, that jade pendants with rings were mostly created during Yuan times. Jade represented in Fig.7-31, is a further example of this kind.

7.4.2 Jade Decorative Pendants

The second type of jade pendant seems to have been purely decorative. These jade pendants are either in open-work or drilled with holes, to enable them to be threaded and hung.



Fig. 7-32

Unlike other types of jade object, there is only one dragon in the jade pendants illustrated in this thesis (Fig. 7-32). It is a *chi* dragon, a kind of dragon which was held to be the offspring of a dragon proper (Wang Dayou, 1987, p. 56). It is a delicate object, almost carved in the round, and carved in

open-work. The body of the creature is beautifully carved, in a curve. The paucity of known surviving dragon pendants may be related to the imperial prestige of the dragon. To wear a jade dragon pendant may have been exclusively an emperor's privilege. If this were so, any jade dragon pendants there were in the Yuan court would have been buried with the Yuan emperors. Archaeological evidence indicates that a large number of the presently known burial jades were personal belongings, including personal pendants (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, p. 21). It could also be that the reason that there is hardly any evidence of dragon pendants of the Yuan period, due to the severely restricted number of known Yuan tombs, and the great lack of apposite archaeological evidence, as discussed in Chapter One.

7.4.3 Jade Mammal-pendants



Fig. 7-33



Fig. 7-34

Pendants, unlike plaques, are often carved in the round, are easy to hang, and may be fondled in the hand, a traditional habit in China. Fig. 7-33, illustrating from the Qing Court Collection, shows a jade sculpture of two lions, an adult and its young at play, carved in the round. Both lions have strong, deep incisions on the joints of their legs and on their bodies, such incisions being typical of the Yuan way of depicting animals. Underneath the neck of the adult lion, and between the heads of the two lions, there are two openings, not drilled, but there as a natural part of the open-work. They could have been used to thread a cord through to hang the jade from. Additionally, or alternatively, the piece could have been fondled in the hand, since its shape is that of a quite smooth pebble. Like the lion pendant, what is shown in Fig. 7-34 is a

piece of agate monkey excavated from a Yuan Dynasty tomb of southern China.⁵

This agate has large reddish brown areas, with some creamy grey parts. The monkey, which is carved in the round, is with its right hand scratching its fairly large head and its left hand playfully holding its small tail. There is a hole drilled all the way through the monkey from its head to its bottom.

During the Yuan period, the Mongol rulers forbade commoners to use jades (Shi Weimin, 1996a, p. 89). Agate then came into use, and was favoured as a substitute for jade when making jewel or ornaments for commoners. Top quality agate was red in colour, or reddish with some yellow or white or grey (Shi Weimin. 1996. p89).



Fig. 7-35

The quality of the stone of this agate monkey appears to have fitted into the top category. Its owner could have been Chinese, since it was unearthed in the south. The monkey is one of the most favoured creatures of the Chinese zodiac, and closely resembles man in physical appearance and basic social structures (Hua Huilun, et al, 1991, p. 15). Its playful characteristics were successfully depicted in this piece.

Somewhat different in shape, the jade in Fig. 7-35 is a charming example of a recumbent deer. It has its head slightly raised. There are intaglio lines on its back, to

⁵ This agate monkey was excavated from the tomb of Qian Yu, in April, 1960, 17 Kilometres south to Wuxi City (Xu Lin, 1998, p.1). The paralleled pattern called veins on agate, though very vague on this piece which can hardly be seen, plays an "natural" part to have presented the monkey's minutely annulated appearance, especially over the fore part of the body, indicated by Glover M. Allen (Allen, 1938, p. 290). The colours of the agate were cleverly used and carved to have shown the features of the monkey in real life. The brown areas of the agate are for the brown furs to have presented a real monkey's back, head and body. The grey marks of the stone are to show the monkey's chest and abdomen. This way of using natural colours of the material in carving of the Yuan period is shown in many jade craftsmanship of the time. The agate monkey on the whole is very vividly depicted to have successfully presented its liveliness and loveliness. But each line carved on the monkey is, when looking closely, not necessarily finely treated. This method of jade carving, according to Yang Boda, is defined as a phenomenon of "back to the simplicity to present its natural beauty"(Yang Boda, 1993, p. 17). Agate is 6.5-7 degree in Mols scale and jade, 6-6.5 degree (Luan Binao. 1989. p221-222). Their similarity in hardness of these two materials would have required similar efforts and tools to work on, and similar effects and styles would have resulted upon.

represent fur, and the animal has a very small tail. Each of these features is depicted in a lively way, but there is a large hole in its neck near the shoulder. The latter considerably damages the calm and elegant beauty of this small creature. Presumably the hole was drilled through it for hanging purposes.

Although this series of three mammals is too small a number upon which to reach any substantial conclusion as to what animal images could have been employed in the making of pendants in Yuan times, it does indicate some aspects of the jade pendant repertoire. The following section will address other animals in jade, and their decorative functions.

7.4.4 Jade Fish-pendants

The motif of the following group of jade pendants is that of the fish. If the lion was the most popular animal for depicting on the belt-plaque, fish were probably the most common creature to have been used in pendants. Jade fish are believed to have been worn during the Shang Dynasty (16th-11th centuries BC) (Qi Meng, 1992, p. 53). They were also widely depicted in jades during the Tang Dynasty (Chen Xiasheng, 1984, p. 6). It was under Tang law that court official of the fifth grade upwards were granted fish tallies by the emperor. An embroidered fish-image, exclusively the carp (*Cyprinus ssp.*), was carefully stored in a pouch which was hung from the belt. The reason for esteeming the carp was because the Chinese word for carp, *Li Yu* 鲤鱼, has the same pronunciation, with the same third pitch-tone, as the surname of the Tang emperors,⁶ *Li* 李, a neat homophonic coincidence. It was also believed that the carp never shut its eyes (Chen Xiasheng, 1984, p. 6). That was regarded as a sign that the Tang Dynasty would last forever, and was apparently the most important reason for according such immense importance to the fish.

⁶ In the years 685 to 704 during the Tang Dynasty, China was run by the woman who had been the wife of the third Tang emperor, Gaozong (r. 650-684). When Emperor Gaozong died, this wife, surnamed Wu, changed from the Tang dynastic title to that of Zhou. She sat on the throne, becoming the only formally ruling empress in Chinese history. Her absolute rule lasted for 19 years. Before and after her, the entire Tang Dynasty was ruled by emperors surnamed Li.

During the Song Dynasty, the passion for the fish had subsided somewhat, not least because Song emperors did not have the surname *Li*. The image of the fish continued, however, to be a salient tradition in art. In Chinese, the word for fish in general is pronounced *yu* 鱼. This pronunciation happens to be the same as that of the word for “surplus” or “abundance”, *yu* 余 so that the image of the fish became an enduring symbol of wealth. The fish was depicted in the Song imperial court in a slightly different manner, not as something hidden within a pouch as in Tang times, but embroidered on the exterior of the pouch itself (Chen Xiasheng, 1984, p. 6). In the Song court, a golden fish was embroidered onto the outside a pouch to be worn with a purple-coloured gown, while a pouch embroidered with a silver fish was worn with a pink robe.

It is recorded in the Mongols’ earliest historical source that the fish was one of the creatures that gave them strength (*The Secret History of the Mongols*, 13th century, p. 24). Fish, together with various meats, were an important food source for the Mongols (Namujila, 1995, p. 66). When Chinese influences deeply penetrated the Yuan court, after the Mongols had moved to Dadu in 1271, the image of the fish became increasingly important, as a symbol of wealth and fertility (Brinker, et al, 1989, no.73).

There are at least two hundred jade-fish objects in the Imperial Collection of the Palace Museum (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, Interview). The jade fish carefully selected for discussion in this thesis serve to represent three basic types of fish created during the Yuan period.

The first type of jade fish is one rendered in a realistic style. Its body is fairly long, sometimes without obvious scales. The eyes are depicted as two little circles. Sometimes, there is a short intaglio line around the maxilla. The caudal fin is divided, like open scissors. A jade fish of this form is found in the Qing Court Collection (Fig. 7-36). Its body is fairly smooth, with what appear to be scales

represented by a few very small marks within the jade itself. The body is curled up with its tail high in the air. There is a lotus leaf above the fish, and some water plants cling around its body. A hole penetrates the abdomen of the fish on its left side, suggesting that it functioned as a pendant.



Fig. 7-36

The style of representing the water plant leaves strongly reminds the viewer of its similarity to oak leaf carving during the Yuan period, which has been discussed in Chapter Five. The major vein in the middle of the oak leaf is wide and bold, and small vein along sides is not very regular but adequate enough to present its reality. This jade fish has a few hardly visible scales, though there are some very, very finely carved intaglio lines to suggest this feature. The most important character of this jade fish is its vivid and strong movement of its body. This is recognisably another Yuan characteristics of jade fish.

The physical appearance of this jade fish suggests that it might have been of a carp modelled on a real carp (No. 71). Another jade carp was displayed in a recent Hong Kong exhibition (Fig. 7-37). It is greyish green in colour and its body was rendered with net-shaped scales. The body is vigorously curled up. And its tail waves elegantly. Its mouth is slightly open. A vertical perforation runs through the body. This object is believed to exhibit a number of the characteristics of Yuan fish pendants (Zhou Nanquan, 1998, Interview).



Fig. 7-37

Realistic renderings of the carp can also be found in Yuan ceramics. A calendar-dish plate in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford is dated to the Yuan Dynasty, and depicts

four carp swimming (No. 72). The fish, although simply depicted, show all the basic features of the carp, as does the simplified version of jade (Fig. 7-36). An illustration of the carp can be found printed in No. 73, and one with showing anatomical accuracy (No. 73) in a book describing the diet and nutrition of the Yuan period. Even its small whiskers are shown. Each of these carp, depicted in different forms of art during the Yuan Dynasty, suggests that it was probably fashionable at that time to depict the carp in a naturalistic manner.



Fig. 7-38



Fig. 7-39

The second type of jade fish is also depicted in a fairly realistic style. This time, however, it is not the carp but the mandarin-fish (*Siniperca loona*), as shown in Fig. 7-38. The scales are finely carved in a net-shaped pattern, and the piece is made with consummate skill. The tail is full, round and correct. The eyes are depicted with round intaglio circles. An example of a similar jade fish shown in Fig. 7-39 has its premaxilla and mandible depicted with an almost anatomical accuracy (No. 74). The pectoral and anal fins are rendered in a compact

way to fit the nature of the jade. If a painting of fish from the Song Dynasty could be described as illustrating a naturalistic style (No. 75), then these two jade fish from the Yuan Dynasty would match that artistry in three-dimensional terms. Both fish are drilled with a vertical hole in between their first and second dorsal fins and down through their abdomens to behind the pelvic fin.

The jade fish found in the Qing Court Collection (Fig. 7-40) is another example, of a similar kind to the jade fish illustrated in Fig. 7-38 and Fig. 7-39. It is creamy white in colour,



Fig. 7-40

with some black marks. Its mandible is pierced through with a hole, and there are two pairs of holes in its abdomen. This jade fish may have been used either as a pendant or as an ornament. Fish of this type can also be found in Western collections, and that shown in Fig. 7-41 was recently exhibited in Hong Kong. The latter, however, is fairly heavily polished, and hardly shows any scales on its body. Its shape is round. And the pelvic and anal fins are simply rendered, with only circled intaglio lines to indicate their positions. Its distinctive mouth, round eyes and fan-shaped tail are elegantly and well depicted.



Fig. 7-41

The mandarin-fish has the advantage of a favourable-sounding name, being called *gui yu* 鳎鱼 in Chinese. A different character also pronounced *gui*, but if written as 贵 means “wealth and eminence”. Another character *yu* 余 is also pronounced *yu*, and, as we have mentioned above means “surplus” or “abundance”. Using the implication of these



Fig. 7-42

homophones, the image of the mandarin-fish is thus employed to auspiciously symbolise becoming rich, eminent and prosperous.



Fig. 7-43

The third type of fish is a motif of fish with water plants. This motif is illustrated with two jade fish from the Imperial Collection, shown in Fig. 7-42 and Fig. 7-43. They both resemble the mandarin-fish, with fan-



Fig. 7-44

shaped tails and large mouths with thick “lips” (premaxilla and mandible). The one in Fig. 7-42 is rendered with fairly small net-shaped scales. There is a gap on its dorsal surface to indicate the space between first and the second dorsal fin. There is a lotus flower in the fish’s mouth. There

some large areas of discoloration on this jade object. The other jade fish (Fig. 7-43) has some water plants around its body, which is curled to indicate vigorous movement. These two fish are good examples of the third type of jade fish, as is seen when they are compared with other jades in the same category, such as that shown in Fig. 7-44. The latter is a very dark jade. The dark colour could have been injected into the jade artificially, to make it look ancient (Zhou Nanquan, 1995, p. 145). The fish's dorsal fin and tail are carved in a stylised manner. Although the lotus flower is fairly well depicted, floating in the water, the fish itself appears a little rigid. There is no hole in this jade. It may have been used as a paperweight, although it looks too large and certainly too heavy for that purpose. Alternatively it may just have been a large domestic jade ornament.

Carp were also depicted in this fish-with-water-plants motif, as seen in Fig. 7-45. This jade fish is dated to the Jin Dynasty, and was excavated in 1973 in Zhongxing Commune, Suipin County, Heilongjiang Province. It is presented in a very calm and still manner, although in naturalistic



Fig. 7-45

style. The open scissors-shaped tail fin suggests that it is a carp. Early jade fish, from before the early Yuan, like this Jin example, largely seem to be less vigorous and dynamic. Instead, they too appear to convey an air of tranquillity.

The fish-with-lotus motif is another example of a homophonic or punning play on words. The auspicious phrase *lian nian you yu* 连年有鱼 means “to have abundance (or “extra”) year after year”. (Zhou Nanquan. 1987. p17). It originally expressed the farmers’ desire to have some savings left over at the end of the year, for year after year. The Chinese word for “lotus” is also pronounced *lian*, with a different written character (莲). The word for fish, as we have seen above, is also pronounced *yu*, written with the character 鱼. The first and last characters of this auspicious four-character phrase thus sharing the same pronunciation as the words for “lotus” and “fish” (*lian* and *yu*), the lotus and fish are therefore employed to represent the whole

phrase. This may seem a somewhat forced connection, but it is one that has long been happily made.

7.5 JADE RING-SHAPED ORNAMENTS

There are a number of ring-shaped ornaments among the jades considered for this thesis. Some of these are obviously belt-girdles, ring-shaped structures which lie behind the belt-buckle (Fig. 7-46). Others may have been used to decorate sword-guards, (Fig. 7-50). Further research and more archaeological evidence are required, however, to prove this latter possibility. They may at least have had more than one function during the Yuan period.

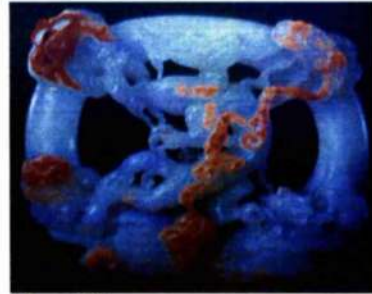


Fig. 7-46

The jade in Fig. 7-46 is a typical example of the belt-girdles made in the Yuan court. It is a beautiful ring-based jade object with a dragon at its centre. The dragon, which exhibits the typical Yuan characteristics of an extended, slightly curled upper lip, long flowing mane, and three-claws, is decorated with flames around its body. Together with the flames, there are a number of sunset clouds, which are gloriously coloured in the hue of the jade-skin. The extraordinarily fine craftsmanship of this jade belt-girdle strongly suggests that it may have had an imperial ownership.



Fig. 7-47

Another jade ring from the Qing Court Collection is illustrated in (Fig. 7-47). It is a white jade, with some reddish brown marks from the jade-skin. Two birds are depicted with distinctive crowns on their heads. Their wings are neatly folded in repose, and they have fairly round tails. They are perching on a crossbeam,

under which dangle some splendid ribbons and a ball with a pattern making it resemble a peony-flower. Both birds depicted with beautifully carved plumage. At the back of each bird, there are a couple of loop-like holes for putting a belt through.

When details of this jade were first published, it was called “ring-ornament of eagles” (Palace Museum, 1987, p. 18). Coincidentally, in the Imperial Collection of the National Palace Museum (No. 76), there is a piece of cut silk with an eagle on it, dated to the Song Dynasty. There are many similarities between the silk eagle and the two birds in the jade piece. On the silk, the eagle is rendered with a fairly long but round-ended tail, its wings are folded resting neatly on its back, and its plumage is depicted with shell-shaped feathers. The eagle stands on a beam, with a cord tied to its legs. Clearly this is a trained bird of prey (Chapter Five). The ribbons dangling from the jade piece (Fig. 7-47) could well be the artistic representation of the same kind of cords, ones by means of which the owner could hold his birds.

Analysis of the shape of the jade birds suggests that they may be the Changeable Hawk-eagles (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*) which are found in Asia (No. 77). This hawk-eagle shares with the jade birds the crown on its head, as well as the characteristics of wings, tail and feathers depicted on the jade birds (Fig. 7-47). This identification is, however, only one of the possibilities. Another bird, the bulbul (*Criniger flaveolus*), is found in various places including northern China, and it also shares features with the jade birds (No. 78). It too has a distinctive crown on its head and a round-ended tail. Its beak is fairly pointed, like those shown on the jade. It may, therefore, not be too far-fetched to suggest that the jade birds may have been bulbuls rather than eagles. In Chinese literature, the bulbul is quite a common bird for poets and artists to praise (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 275). Adult bulbuls always fly in pairs, and the bird is hence used as an auspicious symbol of marriage. Additionally, the bird is often depicted in art with peony flowers, signifying both wealth and longevity, which has made it a welcome present for newly-weds.

Before making a final identification of these jade birds, it is worth noting that eight years after they were first shown in a publication, the same jade ring was exhibited again and this time catalogued as “ring ornament of parrots” (Zhou Nanquan, 1995, p. 146). The controversy raised by this new attribution is easily resolved. In the entire Family Psittacidae (Parrots), totalling 703 taxa world-wide, not a single one has a crown on its head (Collar, 1997, pp. 280-479; Higgins, 1997, vol. 4, pp. 192-646). Therefore, the crown, one of the distinctive features of the jade birds, excludes the parrot from further consideration. There are, however, other birds in China, such as the skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) (No. 79), which could have been used as a model for the jade birds. Without further archaeological or historical evidence, it would be unjustified to assign the jade birds (Fig. 7-47) a specific identity, and it is preferred to proffer a range of possibilities.



Fig. 7-49



Fig. 7-50

The following group of ring-shaped objects share features in common: they all are depicted with *chi* dragons. And their functions remain debatable (Zhou Nanquan, 1998, Interview).

The jade ring ornament illustrated in Fig. 7-49, for example, is a creamy white jade ring of a *chi* dragon, the elegant body of which is emerging from the “cream”. Its body is very supple and streamlined, and its tail is highly stylised, ending in two whirlpools. The movement of this animal is elegant rather than vigorous. The final polish of the piece gives it a soft-focus appearance.⁷ Its function has been identified as that of an

ornament. There is no hole on the back of it, however, and it is said to be

⁷ Although the jade in Fig.7-49 is the only jade object of its kind in this chapter, it is by no means unique. I am told that there are several dozen jade rings like that in Fig.7-49 in the Qing Court Collection (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, Interview).

insufficiently smooth to have been used in the conventional way as a piece of marquetry (Zhou Nanquan, 1998, Interview). It is therefore one of the jades made during the Yuan time, the function of which remains debatable.



Fig. 7-51

Less questionably, jade rings, which are believed to have been used as sword-guards, form a special group in the Imperial Collection. Their functional attributions are, however, not always completely unquestionable. For example, it was recorded that, although some swords in the Yuan court did have

jade sword-guards as ceremonial ornaments, these were only for the emperor or the princes (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1934). Historically, the use of the jade sword-guard started during the Han Dynasty, and seems to have declined in the Song Dynasty (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 281). However, a jade sword-guard (Fig. 7-50) was excavated from a Yuan tomb in Anhui Province.⁸ It

is a brownish jade of oval shape, with two *chi* dragons on it, set in relief. They have long manes and small heads with very small faces. These two *chi* dragons don't have two-ended tails.

Coincidentally, these cranial features are well represented in a Yuan jade dish auctioned in New York recently (Fig. 7-51).

The design of the jade illustrated in Fig. 7-50 has a curving-edged, somewhat rectangular hole in the middle of it. This opening seems to be a feature consistent with its use as a sword-guard. The jades



Fig. 7-52



Fig. 7-53

⁸ I understand from Mr. Zhou Nanquan who has permitted me to use this picture of the jade object strictly for the purpose of my thesis only, that there is no excavation report available, and that the picture of the jade object has not been published in China.

illustrated in Fig. 7-52 and Fig. 7-53⁹ are two more examples of this kind. Again, they depict *chi* dragons which are more distinctively Yuan in character. Each animal is simply decorated, and manifests a great sense of vigorous movement. Each has a split-ended tail, like that in the jade shown in Fig. 7-49, although not as highly stylised.

More archaeological discoveries are desirable for a deeper comprehension of the exact function of the jade ring-shaped ornaments made during the Yuan period. Further research into military and ceremonial costumes is likely to yield greater understanding of the usage of jade sword-guards.

7.6 JADE FINIALS

There are said to be several hundred jade finials in the Imperial Collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, Interview). Their functions and dating are always interesting issues to jade experts. Some of these jade objects have been mentioned in publications as finials from the lids of incense-burners, and some are assumed to have been finials for the tops of hats. Some have been dated to the Han Dynasty, and others are variously dated throughout Chinese history up to the last Dynasty.

There are five entries of jade hat-finials clearly recorded in *History of the Yuan*, indicating that the emperors and nobles in the court did wear hats with jade finials on top (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 1930-1942). Additionally, there are a number of records in the same work with indications that the jade hat-finials may have been included in their costume.¹⁰ Other historical sources on that time also record that it was known for sure that the Mongols wore hats with precious stones of various kinds

⁹ Two more jade plaques which are not presented here but in the Catalogue of Jade have also demonstrated some distinctive features of *chi* dragon (see Fig. 7-53a in the Catalogue of Jade).

¹⁰ These records in the *History of the Yuan*, are somewhat ambiguous about the jade hat-finials, and do not express matters in a straightforward manner. For example, it says "jade decorations on the hat", instead of providing a clear, specific description of the objects (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1930).

on the top of them (*Xi Jin Zhi Jiy*, Yuan Dynasty, p. 205). The colour and material of the finial indicated the owner's rank.

Tao Zongyi, a Yuan scholar, reports that jade finials were used on the top of hats, by the Mongol nobles in the Yuan court, for official occasions (Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 84). He records that a very wealthy merchant sold a piece of *hong la* 红刺 (Red Stone) to an official to make a hat-finial during the Yuan reign-period Dade, i.e. 1298-1307. The stone was *yi liang san qian* 一两三钱 (about 203.1 karat) and was sold for the sum of "one hundred and ten thousand *ting* (a currency measure equal to 5 or 10 *liang* of gold or silver currency) of Zhongtong reign-period paper-currency" (*zhong tong chao shi yi wan ding* 中统钞十一万锭). Red Stone addressed by the Mongols referred to *Ku-rand* (*Hong la* in the Mongol language). The word *Ku-rand* originated from the Tamil (or Indian) language *Kurand*, meaning "hard".

Mineralogical, the word "corundum" is from the same root of *Kurand* (Luan Bingao, 1984, p. 34). The ruby, the red diamond, is a member of the corundum family. Thus the *hong la* (Red Stone) was in fact ruby. There is, however, currently insufficient evidence to support the opinion that only ruby was used to make hat-finials at any particular time, especially since there are hundreds of jade finials in the Imperial Collections which were made after the Song Dynasty. A Western scholar in the 19th century also commented that jade finials for hats were used in ancient times in China, although he failed to identify specifically when and by whom (Blondell, 1875, p. 408). One thing, however, is sure. The Mongols did wear hats topped with large precious stones (No. 80).

In the late Ming Dynasty, during the reign-period Wanli (r.1573-1620), the jade hat-finial was again recorded. the record reads:

近又珍玉帽顶，其大有至三寸。高有至四寸者。价比三十年前加十倍。以其可作鼎彝盖上嵌饰也。问之，皆曰此宋制。又有云宋人尚未辨此。必唐物也。竟不晓此乃故元时物。元时除朝会后，王公贵人俱带大帽。视其顶之花样为等威。尚见有九龙而一龙正面者。则元主自御也。当时俱西域国手所作。至贵者值数千金。本朝还我华装。此物斥不用。无奈为估客所昂。一时竟珍之。且

不知典故。劝云宋物，其耳食之从而知之。(Shen Defu, Ming Dynasty, p. 662).

Recently, jade hat-finials are coming to be highly valued. Some of them are as big as 3 *cun* and as tall as 4 *cun*, and their price is 10 times as much as 30 years ago, because they can be used as an ornament inserted on the top of lids of bronze tripod-cauldrons and bronze wine-jars. If one asks, everybody always says they were manufactured in the Song Dynasty. There are also people who say that the Song people did not know what they were, and that they must have been Tang objects, actually not realising that they were originally objects of the Yuan period. In the Yuan, apart from after court assemblies, princes, lords and nobles all wore large hats. Their grade-authority could be told from the decoration on the top of their hat. One still sees ones which have nine dragons on them, with one dragon full-face on, these being restricted to use by the Yuan ruler himself. In those times, they were all made by the best craftsmen in the country, from the Western Region [i.e. Central Asia], and the most costly ones were worth several thousand pieces of gold. In our Ming Dynasty, we have returned to our Chinese costume, and these objects have been excluded, and are not used. But, none the less, they are highly esteemed by connoisseurs, and all our contemporaries in fact prize them, but, not knowing the true history of their origins, they, without stopping to think, declare them to be Song objects. So they are just chiming in with rumours.

In *History of the Yuan*, it is also noted that the emperor “wears seven heavy precious stones on his hats” (*guan qi bao zhong ding guan* 冠七宝重顶冠) (Song Lian, et al. 1370, p.1938). All these historical records indicate that jades were employed as hat-finials, but sadly fail to say which forms or patterns were used at that time to indicate which rank or social status.

7.6.1 Jade Dragon Finals

The most common motif on jade finials during the Yuan Dynasty seems to have been that of a dragon and birds placed in a floral setting. In the imperial jade collections, there is a jade dragon finial (Fig. 7-54) with the obvious Yuan characteristics of a long flowing mane, a long body dancing in the clouds, and a upper lip longer than the lower lip and slightly curled upwards. It is a very compact object, occupying a fairly small volume of space, on a base pierced with four pairs of

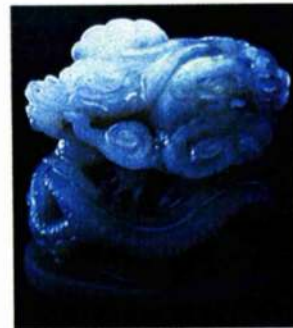


Fig. 7-54

holes, probably for attachment. There is no imperial document or historical record to indicate its owner or usage. Along with this jade finial, there is another of relatively large size (Fig. 7-55). In this jade, a dragon is dancing with a phoenix among peony flowers. Both the phoenix and some of the foliage are carved in the brownish jade-skin, which provides the colour for the bird's beautiful feathers and the luxuriant flowers. To have made use of the natural colour of the jade-skin or any impurities in the jade is recognised as one of the characteristics of a Yuan jade artefact. This way of treating jade may have started in the Song period (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 256). This finial is convex on top and has a concave base. There are holes¹¹ drilled in the base, providing for threading and attachment.



Fig. 7-55

This jade finial is known to have been for imperial use. The dragon represents the emperor, and the phoenix represents the empress. This motif is pervasive throughout the history of Chinese art, and other examples of it can be found in imperial palaces and courts. Interestingly, the jade finial with nine dragons mentioned by Shen Defu is no longer in the Imperial Collection. Its present location is something of a mystery.

Considerable numbers of jade dragon-finials are found not only in the Imperial Collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, but also in Western collections. The first imperial jades including jade finials started to spread to the Western world during the mid-19th century, as a consequence of the series of foreign invasions of China, and the subsequent looting of the

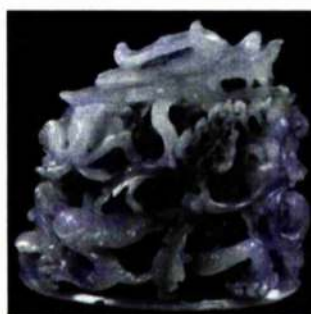


Fig. 7-56

Qing court. In 1861, a consignment of imperial treasures from the Qing court arrived in Germany. One piece was a jade finial which eventually ended up in the Staatliches

¹¹ There is no indication of the exact number of holes.

Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden. It is a depiction of a dragon dancing in a floral setting, carved in a beautiful white jade with some brownish jade-skin (Fig. 7-56). The dragon is carved in the distinctive Yuan fashion: the mouth is open with the longer upper lip slightly curling upwards, there are two horns on the head, and a heavy mane streams backwards. The plants are boldly carved, with strong, deep cuts. There are four holes underneath the finial.

I found another jade dragon-finial in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University (Fig. 7-57). It is greenish in colour, is also of a dragon depicted in a floral setting, and bears a striking resemblance to the one found in Dresden (Fig. 7-56). Although this piece is not dated, everything about it strongly suggests a similar dating, to the Yuan or early Ming Dynasty.

The final jade in this series is illustrated in Fig. 7-58, and is a jade finial from the Qing Court Collection, this time the *chi*-dragon being depicted.



Fig. 7-57

7.6.2 Jade Finals of Birds in Flora

Discussions, arguments and assumptions about the original usage and function of jade finials have intensified since a jade finial was excavated in 1952 from a Yuan tomb in Qingpu County, Shanghai (Fig. 7-59). The occupants of the tomb were the famous hydraulic engineer and painter of the Yuan Dynasty Ren Renfa and his family.¹² (Shen Lingxin, et al, 1982, p. 58).

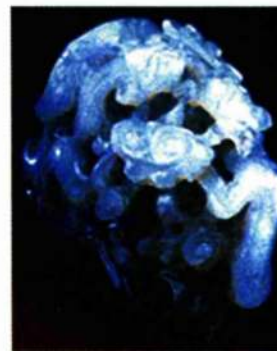


Fig. 7-58

¹² Ren Renfa (1254-1327), from Qingpu County in present-day Shanghai. His courtesy name was Ziming, and his cognomen Yueshan Daoren. He had two sons, Ziliang and Zizhao, who were also painters specialising in human figures. Their paintings are not, however, thought to be as good as those of their father (Ling Shuzhong, 1981, no. 111).

This white jade finial, which could be important for helping towards an understanding of the use of jade finials, was only very briefly mentioned in the excavation report, in no more than two short phrases, as “a white jade burner finial; egret in lotus leaves” (Shen Lingxin, et al, 1982, p. 56). The workmanship is, however, very sophisticated. The open-work portrays an egret standing in a network of lotus leaves and other plant stems. Although this jade is named as the finial of the lid of a burner, no lid was discovered in the tomb (Shen Lingxin, et al, 1982, pp. 55-59). The possibility remains that it was mis-identified, and that the contents of the tomb were incompletely researched. Or the use of the cover was of wood and did not survive burial.



Fig. 7-59

Jades illustrated in Fig. 7-60, Fig. 7-61, Fig. 6-62, Fig. 7-63 and Fig. 7-64, although depicting a variety of birds and flowers, as well as deer and tortoises, fully support this



Fig. 7-62



Fig. 7-63

conclusion. The five auspicious birds in a floral setting serve to symbolise a smooth and peaceful personal environment. A moral message is also conveyed by the depiction of deer and cranes among pine trees. A deer is often depicted with a

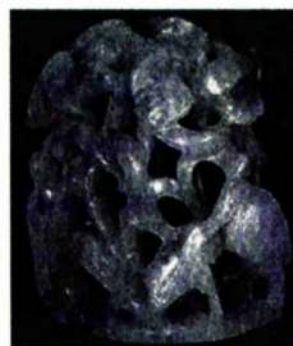


Fig. 7-60



Fig. 7-61

lingzhi in its mouth, as symbols of longevity. As the word for deer, pronounced *lu* 鹿 has the homophone *lu* 禄 meaning “the remuneration of an official”, it

propitiously evokes the idea of wealth and prosperity (Brinker, et al, 1985, no. 77). The crane was the bird of the Daoist immortals, who are sometimes visualised as flying on a crane, and therefore a central symbol of longevity and superhuman wisdom. A group of cranes flying up into the sky, or towards the sun, evokes



Fig. 7-64

thoughts not only of communication with deities but, on a more worldly plane, the wish to rise in private, social, economic, or professional spheres. When these creatures are placed together in art, they auspiciously symbolise and imply long life.

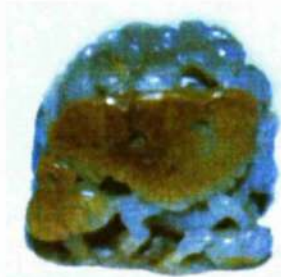


Fig. 7-65

The last jade finial with birds in a floral setting to be considered in this chapter contains some unique features (Fig. 7-66). At first glance, it looks like the other jade finials with birds and flowers. On close inspection, however, it is very different from them. Apart from the usual motif of a crane or an egret in a floral setting, which is also present on this jade, it shows a falcon attacking a swan! Without doubt, this is a most striking example of the symbolic spring hunting scene. The bold

and unconstrained carving of the birds' feathers and the plant leaves unquestionably indicate its Mongol identity.



Fig. 7-66

In a recent excavation, the tomb of Yelu Zhu 耶律铸 and his wives has been found (Jiang Dong. 1998. p. 5). Yelu Zhu and his father Yelu Chuca were both high-ranking Khitan officials in the Yuan court (Song Lian, et al,

1370, pp. 3455-3464). Although no jade finial was found in this tomb, a pottery human figure was uncovered (No. 81). This figure is wearing a hat with a fairly wide brim. On top of the hat, a finial of some sort is indicated.

Taken together, the twelve jade finials presented in this chapter share a number of common characteristics, regardless of specific differences in their motifs. They are all set in open-work and in the round. All are around 4cm (+- 0.5cm) in height and 5cm (+-1cm) in diameter on their base, with the exception of Fig. 7-56, which may have been too large to be used as a hat-finial (height :7.5cm; diameter:7cm).

The Ming scholar Gao Lian (1573-?) believed that after the Song Dynasty jade was carved for both hat-finials and incense-burner finials (Gao Lian, Ming Dynasty, p. 472). Use of the incense-burner reached its peak during the Han Dynasty. It was made of bronze, normally with a lid (and sometimes a finial made on the lid, the two as one single piece) and decorated with religious landscapes (Chen Peifen, 1996, p. 62). During the Song Dynasty, the industry of imitating antique bronzes catered to what had become something of a fashion for them. Bronze jars, mirrors, ritual containers and basins were the objects usually imitated (Chen Peifen, 1996, p. 40). Incense-burners, plates, cups and other daily articles were, however, also imitated, often in haste, and usually with a lack of high quality. During the Yuan Dynasty, the bronze industry noticeably declined (Kerr, 1990, p. 18). Apart from some bronze containers and a very small quantity of bronze mirrors of bad quality, there were hardly any bronzes in the imperial court, or had any significant use (Chen Peifen, 1996, p. 40). It is, however, occasionally recorded that there was a bronze incense-burner in a “meeting-room” of the Yuan court (Shi Weimin, 1996b, p. 34). The incense-burner was situated on a desk, and, as it was not normally in use, it was covered with a piece of satin, except when the emperor received his officials there. This suggests that the incense-burner was not much in use in the Yuan court, as compared to previous dynasties. During the Ming Dynasty, bronze burners came into fashion again. Xuande Incense-burners or Xuande ritual *lu*-shaped ornaments (*Xuande lu* 宣德炉) manufactured during the Ming reign-period Xuande, i.e. 1426-1435, for example, were of fine style and good quality. They have been regarded as among the best of the imperial treasures in the Palace Museum. Rarely, however, are they found with jade finials.

Various jade ornamental containers, such as the *lu* 炉, 卣 *hu* and copied and decorated with ancient motifs, became something of a fashion in the Ming court (Yang Boda, 1993a, p. 23). An example of a jade incense-burner dated to the Ming



Fig. 7-69

Dynasty has been chosen here to demonstrate the imitation of an ancient bronze with symmetrical pattern (Fig. 7-69). Its lid does have a finial, but the finial and the lid are in one piece. Large numbers of examples of this kind, from both the Ming and Qing dynasties, can be found in the Palace Museum, Beijing.

Most of the incense-burners made of either jade or bronze in the Imperial Collection in the Palace Museum are imitations of ancient styles, and show highly stylised



Fig. 7-67

animals carved in symmetrical patterns. Most of the Yuan Dynasty jade finials in the Imperial Collection, however, show realistic animals and flowers, depicted in a naturalistic style, which convey a moral theme, or tell a story of immortality, as seen in Fig. 7-60, Fig. 7-61 and Fig. 7-62. If they had been attached as lid-finials to incense-burners, their composition would have appeared quite alien to that of the body of the burner. Indeed, it has been acknowledged that, in later dynasties, “some jade finials were put on the lids of incense-burners as lid-finials probably because it was not known what the finials were used for originally” (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, Interview).

Even though some of the jade finials did physically fit the lids of some incense-burners, these finials and lids unmistakably look as though they do not belong to one another.¹³ Zhang Guangwen has admitted that he does not know what the large

¹³ Although I have seen some of these “misplaced” finials and burners in the Palace Museum, Beijing. I was not allowed to take photographs.

number of the Yuan Dynasty jade finials contained in the Qing Court Collection were used for (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, p. 107). Thus, many wooden lids must have been made in later times in court workshops during the Ming and Qing periods, so as to fit the jade finials onto the burners or ritual containers. They became decorative rather than functional, and there was usually a corresponding wooden stand for each burner or ritual container.

There are, however, some jade finials which don't seem to fit onto anything, neither hats nor a burners. The jade illustrated in Fig. 7-67 is a specimen of this sort. It is green in colour and shows a dragon sitting on a lotus base. This sitting dragon may be compared with metal sculptures of the same subject from the Yuan period. For example, a bronze dragon (No. 82) excavated from a Yuan tomb in 1983 is also in a sitting position. Its mouth and body share some distinctive characteristics with the jade: a dramatic upward curled upper lip and a reptilian chest. These features unambiguously display their Yuan identity. What makes the jade dragon something of a mystery, however, is its size: 12.6cm in height and 6.4cm in diameter on its base. It would have been too large and heavy to function as a finial.¹⁴ Had it been used on an incense-burner's lid, there would have been some indication of smoke on the jade, or there would have been some "burning or smoked marks" on it, but both of these are absent (Jing Zhichun, et al, 1996, p. 110). This jade final has no attachment holds on its bottom either. Therefore, it can conclude that this jade object is not a lid final at all.



Fig. 7-68

¹⁴ I was permitted to see an additional two jade lion finials from the Qing Court Collection, but not allowed to measure them. They were about 15 cm in height and 6cm in diameter at the base. I was told by Zhang Guangwen, the curator in the Jade Department of the Palace Museum, that the Palace Museum does not know the usage to which these two jade lion finials were put. "They seem to be too big to fit on anything properly." (Zhang Guangwen, 1998, Interview).

By way of contrast, we may consider a burned jade lion that is found in the Hardinge collection (Fig. 7-68). It is a somewhat large (height 14.3cm) jade finial of a peculiar white colour, which has a “dry” white appearance rather than the normal moist-look of white jade. It is in the form of a strange-looking creature, with a reptilian chest just like that illustrated in Fig. 7-67, and sitting on a square base with four holes in it. It is recorded in Hardinge’s records solely as: “Burnt jade lion”. When jade is burnt, it has a chalky white colour, which is sometimes referred to as “chicken-bone white” (Li Xiede, 1991, p. 23). Burn-marks of this type are not seen on the jade illustrated in Fig. 7-67. Where could such large finials have been placed? In *History of the Yuan*, it is recorded that jade finials of some sort were used for decorating imperial vehicles in the court, such as the jade carriages, gold carriages, elephant carriages, leather carriages and wooden carriages (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 1944-1953). Although a long list of every piece of decoration is presented in great detail in this official history, each item is not clearly described as regards its motif or depiction, let alone as to how it was put in use. For example, the roof of the carriage (or more likely its canopy or sunshade) is said there to have been “decorated with a jade dragon-finial” (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1945), without specifying exactly in what fashion.

7.7 SUMMARY

The jade costume-decorations and other ornamental objects illustrated in this chapter form a largest group of jades in this thesis. Naturally, the most accessible way for the Mongols to be able to keep jades was to carry jades around with them. Most of the jade ornaments are therefore adornments for belts. The jade finial, however, still remains some thing of a mystery with respect to its function. Possibly, such finials were made for hats, lids, sunshades, and as well as domestic ornaments. More archaeological information and research into the historical archives might perhaps provide further clues. These same archives have already revealed the extent to which jade costume-ornaments were appreciated and used in old times. We know, for example, that the Yuan emperor wore at least 29 pieces of jades on his clothes on a single occasion (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 1930-1934). His other official, and non-official, clothing was also covered in jade, although this was jade of a less prestigious

nature. Additionally, his wives, children, court nobles and senior officials, as well as eminent religious leaders and monks, were all adorned with jade ornaments, the number varying according to their rank. Examples of these are to be found among the jades illustrated in Chapter Six. Many of the 34 ornaments referred to in Chapter Five also seem to have been used as costume decorations.

Not surprisingly, costume ornaments occupy a similar position in the collection in the British Museum, which is also predominantly made up of ornaments (Rawson, 1995, pp. 323-347).

In *History of the Yuan*, it is recorded that the costume worn in the court largely followed that used by the Chinese of the Tang Dynasty (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1929). Hansen has stressed that Mongol dress did not show much independent creativity, with most of the influence coming from China itself and from the Mongols' highly respected religious leaders in Tibet (Hansen, 1950, p. XX).¹⁵ It is a piece of common knowledge that the Mongols did have their own national costumes before they established their empire in China. Chinese influence enhanced their artistic creativity, however, and took account of the practical needs of their costume decoration. Leather belts, for example, were not of Mongol origin, but were adopted by the Mongols because of their convenience not only for fastening their gowns, but also for hanging pendants from, and because the belts were an attractive item in themselves. The jade ornaments in Chapter Four, Five and Six, as well as this chapter of this thesis constitute a rich collection of belt-plaques, belt-buckles, belt-girdles and belt-tips, and of various pendants attached to belts.

By now, I have demonstrated all jade objects selected for this thesis and conducted description and preliminary analysis accordingly and individually. Next chapter will

¹⁵ Hansen continues to argue, however, that the influence from Europe and Islam did not affect the culture of the Mongols in a lasting way, as the intercourse with the western Mongolian realms was soon discontinued (Hansen, 1950, p. XX).

provide an intensive discussion about jade animals, instead of jade objects. What animals were chosen during the Yuan period and why, will be analysed.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION

There are altogether 238 images of jade animals present in the 146 jade objects considered in this thesis (Catalogue of Jade). These jades are the entirety of the most reliable, authentic and available sources of Yuan jades that can be depended upon for research in depth. They are sufficient in number to demonstrate the ways in which animals were used in jades. There is no doubt that they were employed both for religious and magical purposes, as well as for decoration.

The animals of this thesis fall into two defined groups, those of realism and zoomorphism. They are both made up of recognisable animals, in the sense that they depict either animals of real life or creatures, with which we are familiar, such as the dragon, even though the latter do not exist in the real world. The term “realism” embraces the representation of nature in an objective and naturalistic way. The degree of reality, which was portrayed, could be extremely flexible, for one reason because the animal models may not always have been fully observed and understood. The best example of the realistic type can be seen in the jade objects shown in Fig. 5-27 and Fig. 5-28. The deer has malformed antlers, which were probably the result of a hormone imbalance in its body. Realism such as this used models which were readily available, to portray a related image. Naturalism, on the other hand, conveyed movement and vitality, and did show the natural stance of the animal. Most of the jade objects of recognisable birds of prey and swans or geese, which were discussed in Chapter Five, may be included in this group. The naturalistic depiction of animals has been referred to as “a characteristic of the hunters’ art, resulting from the need for accurate observation of the prey” (Hicks, 1993, p. 7). Hicks’ theory in this respect certainly coincides with the nature of the nomadic hunting scenes depicted in the Jades of Spring Water and Autumn Mountain belonging to the Northern peoples in China during the period from the 10th to the 14th centuries. It should, however, also be stressed that realism and naturalism could sometimes be employed interchangeably, or depicted in combination.

A number of animals considered in the thesis, however, can not, when closely inspected, be seen as either realistic or naturalistic. They may bear anatomical parts not properly belonging to them, as in the case of the pig with a pair of wings (Fig. 4-14). Other animals, too, sometimes have stylised parts to their bodies, despite which it still remains clear what is the origin of the image. Stylisation is the modification of Nature by the application of elements designed to convey admiration or a particular interpretation, or for the sake of simplification or elaboration, and liberates the animal from the need for resemblance. Some jade lions, for example are depicted with manes and tails unrealistically long and curled, and as such are undoubtedly stylised. They are, however, still recognisable as lions.

The animals in the following discussion fall into the first category, that of “realism” or “naturalism”, since they appear to have been modelled from recognisable animals and without too many characteristics untypical of the real-life animal.

The second group of animal figures are examples of “zoomorphism”, a term which, refers to mythical animals, that is those which do not exist in Nature. This is an interesting group. According to Lorblanchet, zoomorphism can be defined as abstraction, which achieves emotional representation through the use of symbolic creatures (Lorblanchet, 1977, p. 46). The large number of jade dragons, phoenixes and other animals with mythical features in this thesis may be classified into this category, since they can be found nowhere in real world, and have been employed purely to symbolise certain moral, social, mythological or aesthetic notions.

However, Collingwood, earlier than Lorblanchet, put forward a different opinion concerning this same group of creatures, considering that only those creatures with no direct reference to reality fell under the term zoomorphism (Collingwood, 1938, pp. 66-69). Thus, from his point of view, none of the jade creatures examined for this thesis would be catalogued as examples of zoomorphism, since each one has some “link” to reality in one way or another, even including the dragon. They are either completely or partially assemblages of physical characteristics borrowed from real animals.

A discussion of the definition of zoomorphism is not, however, a major issue in this thesis. The handful of familiar mythical creatures represented in this thesis are the more conventional and traditional ones, such as the dragon and phoenix. Other animals, although they may show some mythical features, are either discussed in Group One, under “realism”, or in Group Two, under “zoomorphism”, depending on their form. For example, the tiger-headed animal in Fig. 5-32 has spots all over its body, like that of a leopard. But its feathered and branched tail does not accurately represent any animal in the cat family. The tail unmistakably signifies a kind of peacock, or more strictly speaking the tail of some fabulous bird. Although this jade is placed in Chapter Five, the jades of the hunting scene, together with others which mostly depict realistic animals, it would be too far-fetched to classify this creature as either a tiger, a leopard, or a bird. It is therefore categorised as belonging to the zoomorphic group.

According to this principle of categorisation, out of the total number of 238 jade animals, 161 are identified as realistic animals and 77 as mythical creatures.

8.1 ANIMALS IN JADES (238)

The Mongols keenly observed and understood Nature. The animals styled by their artists and artisans (possibly both Chinese and Mongols) were rendered with great force and originality. They had a gift for expressing animal characteristics in a summarising and striking form, with a splendid sense of pattern and scale. In Europe, by the early 12th century, it is believed that realistically depicted animals were becoming a more minor part of ornamentation, although they still continued to retain a symbolic role to some degree (Hicks, 1993, p. 270). At about the same time, on the other side of the globe, animals in the jades of the Yuan Dynasty were still being depicted in a naturalistic way. Only a few conventional mythical creatures, such as the dragon and the phoenix, were produced. The jades considered in this thesis demonstrate this point. The realistic style in jade animals is well represented among them. Some animals, despite the compromising form of the jade from which they are

carved, can nevertheless be recognised at Order and Family or even species level, with details of their eyes, musculature, feathers, skin-texture, joints or fins well indicated. On the basis of the appearance of the animals depicted in jades, it is feasible and appropriate in the following discussion to focus on zoology, as well as literature and history, in order to identify their real-life models, and to analyse their significance in the society and culture of the time.

The relevant animals have been identified as specifically as possible to their Orders. Animals without obviously defining characteristics have only been categorised to their common names. For example, it would be more appropriate to say “a monkey”, when the taxonomy is unclear, than to label the monkey as a Père David’s Macaque (*Macaca thibetana*). The probabilities and possibilities of being able to determine the name of an animal have been discussed in previous chapters, and will be examined in more detail in this chapter.

Mammals are the most common animals appeared in the thesis. They come from the four Orders: Carnivore (tiger and bear), Cetartiodactyla (deer, camel, goat and pig), Perissodactyla (horse) and Primate (monkey). Next in frequency comes smaller numbers of Reptilia (tortoise), Aves (birds) and Pisces (fish), each of which is discussed as a group of its own.

8.1.1 Mammals (Mammalia) (64)

Sixty-four mammals appear in this thesis. This represents almost 40% of the total number of realistic animals under discussion. It is not a surprising figure when the nature of nomadic life with its hunting and animal husbandry is taken into account. This group of mammals is, however, restricted to only a few kinds of animal, less than a dozen in fact. Interestingly, the most familiar and much loved animal of the Mongols, the horse, appears only three times among all the jades considered. On the other hand, the lion, a non-Chinese animal, appears 20 times in total, almost 7 times more often than the horse. This apparently “out-of-proportion” phenomenon (horse

vs. lion) is not an isolated one. It would seem that animals did not appear in jades with a frequency corresponding to their real-life numbers or popularity.

The following discussion will deal with these animals individually, and show their significance in the Yuan Dynasty, from a range of different aspects.

- ***Lions (20)***

The lion, almost second to the dragon in terms of its frequency in the jades considered in this thesis, has appeared in Chinese art throughout history. Ironically, it seems that the animal never existed in China, even in prehistoric times (Sowerby, 1940, p. 68; Corbet, et al, 1991, p. 114). It inhabits Africa and some parts of southwestern Asia, from Asia Minor to western India (Sowerby, 1940, p. 208). The recent Chinese publication *Distribution of Mammalian Species in China*, which describes the history and distribution of Chinese mammals, does not have the lion in its list of 510 species (Zhang Yongzu, 1997, Contents). The scientific evidence strongly supports the view that it is a non-Chinese animal. Never the less, there are said to have been some historical records of “Chinese lions”, although these records were mysteriously lost (Liu Shaomin, 1991, p. 231).

There is every indication that the idea of this animal and its motif evolved on Chinese soil, and that they derived from living lions sent to China as tribute. Where the depiction of the lion has a particularly realistic style, it suggests that the crafter of the piece had a live model to work from. Indeed, the lion is reported to have been seen when brought to China and put on public view there (Ball, 1969, p. 55). The real-life animal was popular in China during the 13th to the 15th centuries (Hoage, et al, 1996, p. 14), and gifts of lions were regularly presented to the emperors. This creature was a great curiosity to people in China, and many enjoyed seeing it.

It is well known that the lion was associated with Indian Buddhism (Wirgin, 1979, p. 193). Schafer, a distinguished Sinologist, has also pointed out that in the Tang Dynasty “the lion in China evoked images of India and Buddhism” (Schafer, 1963, p.

87). Ball, too, has supported this theory, saying that the lion was unknown before the advent of Buddhism in China, which occurred in the 4th century AD (Ball, 1969, p. 53). Sowerby, however, argued for a slightly earlier date, saying that the lion or lion motif did not appear in China or Chinese art until post-Han times (after 220 AD) (Sowerby, 1940, p. 71).

Despite these various contradictory theories, the lion is indeed recorded in Chinese sources as having come to China as tribute during the Eighth Year of the Han Emperor Zhangdi's Jianchu reign-period, i.e. the year AD 83 (Fan Ye, Han Dynasty, p. 7). According to the official Chinese historical records, this must have been the first time that the lion was brought as tribute to China (Gong Yu, et al, 1992, p. 68).

In a Han record, it noted that Han Emperor Wudi received a wild animal from Yueh Chi Guo (present-day Arabia) (Dong Fangshuo, Han Dynasty, p. 277). The animal was recorded to have looked like a leopard cat, yellow in colour. The eminent Sinologist Dr. Berthold Laufer has indicated that this was the first time that the lion was depicted in art in the Han court (Laufer, 1962, p. 242).

Further lions continued to pour in as tribute gifts into China. It is recorded that lions were given as gifts to the emperor on 16 occasions before the Yuan Dynasty, although the exact number of animals is not clear (Gong Yu, et al, 1992, pp. 68-69, 71-72, 74-75, 112, 118, 126, 129, 233, 254 & 258).

According to official records, tributes of lions were not rendered so frequently after the Song Dynasty (Gong Yu, et al, 1992, p. 32-48). Never the less, there are 5 entries in *History of the Yuan* mentioning the lion's being given as tribute. The animal came to the Yuan court in the following years: in 1284 from Hainan (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 269),¹ in 1291 from Zunan (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 350),² in 1296 from

¹ Hainan in this particular case, in *History of the Yuan*, is said to be today's Island of Hainan in the south of China (Gong Yu, et al, 1992, p. 600). There is, however, no scientific record of the lion's ever having existed on this island (Hanák, et al, 1992, p. 208). It could be an error, having arisen from a misunderstanding of the term *Hainan*, which in the Chinese language also means "south of the sea",

Huigu (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 402),³ in 1309 from Sangjiu (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 511),⁴ and in 1327 from Busaiyin (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 678).⁵ Although, the expense of keeping this animal was often reported to the court administration (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 728 & 4238), the lion was still held in favour as means of buying privilege, and of keeping the emperor entertained and boosting his self-esteem. Marco Polo records that the Great Khan used to train the lion for hunting wild boar, bulls and other game (Polo, 13th century, p. 142). The animal is also recorded in travel notes of the Yuan period, as being a “tassel-tailed” beast (Liu You, Yuan Dynasty, p. 927). These lions were said to be of immense size, and bigger than those from Egypt (Polo, 13th century, p. 142). This suggests that the lion paid in tribute to China at that time may have been the Cape lion (*Panthera leo melanochaita*), the largest lion subspecies, found in central Cape Province and Orange State (Hanák, et al, 1992, p. 211).⁶ The lion from Egypt was the second largest subspecies, certainly being larger than the Asian ones. It is likely, therefore, that one or more of the lions in the Yuan court could have come from Africa.

In India, the lion was the supreme symbol of Buddhist religion (Dixey, 1931, p. 7). It was used to exemplify the subjection of the fiercest passions by the gentle influences of Buddhism (Collier, 1921, p. 95). In all countries where Buddhism prevails, including China, the lion motif was a popular subject and was used with such religious fervour that it came to rank along with the dragon as the most common motif figure (Ball, 1969, p. 61). The lion is the emblem of Buddha, and hence

and taken in that sense could mean in this record that the lion was from somewhere in the south across the sea.

² Zunan is believed to have been one of the allied countries of the Yuan Dynasty, and situated somewhere in the far south (Gong Yu, et al, 1992, p. 610). Its exact geographical location is not known.

³ Huigu is the ancient name for the Uygur nation, which was a vassal of the Xixia state (1033-1226), and then came under Mongol control during the thirteenth century AD. The Uygurs now live in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. This is not a place where the lion lived in Nature. It is, however, not too far away from India, where the lion did exist. It is possible that the Uygur people could have acquired the lion from India and paid it as tribute to the Mongol Court during the Yuan Dynasty.

⁴ Sangjiu is an unidentified place of the Yuan period (Gong Yu, et al, 1992, p. 622).

⁵ Busaiyin Empire, today's Iran. This place in ancient times could have had the lion, since the distribution of the animal is recorded as having been south-western Asia, from Asia Minor to western India (Hanák, et al, 1992, p. 208).

⁶ The Cape Lion (*Panthera leo melanochaita*) is believed to have been exterminated in the mid 19th century (Hanák, et al, 1992, p. 211).

representations of Buddha show the lion's body. His doctrine was the Lion's Law, and his sermons the Lion's Roar. Depiction of the Buddhist Lion in art have changed and diversified with changes in cultures and the passage of time. This will be discussed later, together with the subject of the "lion-dog" under the next sub-title.

Images of the lion were woven into costumes for military ceremonies in the Yuan imperial court (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1941), and were also cast on soldiers' armour (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1986). This was probably because of the animal's dreaded reputation among wild beasts, and because of its power and strength. It was also depicted on jade belt plaques, which military officials of high rank were permitted to wear, sometimes together with a silver seal with a lion finial (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 3050).

A dance was performed in China of a lion and a man playing with a ball carved either in the motif of an ancient Chinese coin or of a peony flower. Jades depicting such a dance have been discussed in Chapter Six and Seven, where they were shown to be a symbol of good fortune, blessings and protection against evil (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 236). The lion-dance was performed in order to defeat demons and evil spirits in the court when the Emperor was about to pray for rain and a good harvest (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 918). The same dance was also employed when the Yuan emperor celebrated victories of all kinds (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4149). It consisted of the lion moving in an excited manner, leaping about attempting to seize the ball which, in tantalising fashion, was guided before it by the man. The peony is in Chinese art one of the most common auspicious motifs, symbolising richness, honour, glory and nobility (Brinker, 1989, pl. 83). It conveys, together with the coin-motif on the ball, the concept of wealth, and, being the queen of the flowers is therefore regarded as a fitting companion for the lion, the king of the animals. The combination symbolises power and prosperity. It has been argued that the ball that the lion is trying to catch could also signify mystical power (Ball, 1969, p. 58). This hypothesis is based on ancient arts and beliefs from Egypt, Babylon and Assyria. More evidence would be needed to support such a relationship between the Chinese

lion-dancing, with the coin-motif on the ball, and certain religious ceremonies performed in the Near East.

- *Lion-dogs*

Close inspection of the jade animals which have been called lions shows that they do not all look like the same kind of beast. In fact, some of them unquestionably appear very different, such as those in Fig. 6-2 and Fig. 7-16. The former depicts a pair of creatures with curly manes, thick-set small bodies and protruding eyes. The latter, a fearsome lion with a lean body, has the strong legs of an animal which is designed to be a hunter of prey. Inevitably the question arises: are these two jade objects depicting the same type of animal?

The question is not only asked about animals portrayed in jades, but also about those which are featured in literature. In *Southern Village Plough-Break Records*, it is recorded:

国朝每宴诸王大臣，谓之大聚会。是日，尽出诸兽于万寿山，若虎豹熊象之属，一一列置讫。然后狮子至。身材短小，绝类人家所蓄金毛狗，诸兽见之，畏惧俯伏不敢仰视。
(Tao Zongyi, 1360, p. 289).

During this Yuan Dynasty, whenever an imperial feast is held for the various princes and the grand ministers, it is called a Grand Assembly. On such a day, various animals are brought out onto Mount Wanshou, such as tigers, leopards, bears and elephants, and they are one by one set forth to the end. After that, the lion appears. It is short and small of build, just like the domestic golden-haired dog, and when the other animals see it, they all crouch down in fear, not daring to look up at it.

This extraordinary record has given strength to a suggestion that there may have been another animal in the Yuan court which, although also called a "lion", was different from the lion paid as tribute from abroad. As far as size is concerned, the lion living in the wild is the second largest cat in the world, coming after the tiger in size. (Hanák, et al, 1992, p. 208). The male lion can be as much as three metres in length, with a weight of 220 kilos. The female may be slightly smaller, but is still no less

than two metres long (Zhu Yaixin, 1995, p. 44). The “small-and-short-bodied” animal, recorded as having been in the Yuan court, and as being “like the domestic golden-haired dog”, sounds nowhere near in size to the massive-bodied lion.

Katherine Ball has put forward an argument that the Chinese lion found in art was a modified creature derived from the features of imported lions and those of a native furred beast found in China (Ball, 1969, p. 56). This possibility is certainly repeatedly suggested by the jades considered for this thesis. In the jade shown in Fig. 6-2, the adult animal has a short body with a large head, covered with a heavy curly mane. Its large globular and protruding eyes do not seem to be true to the lion in Nature. Its sturdy body and short legs, although appearing strong, are not like those of a lean and powerful lion in the wild. Another example, illustrated in Fig. 7-9, again depicts a creature of rather mixed characteristics. This animal has a heavy curly mane and enormous eyes, a relatively short body, and a very bushy tail. There is seen to be something obviously alien about this beast when these characteristics are compared to the true natural anatomy of the lion.

Ong Hean-Tatt indicates unequivocally:

Pekinese dogs are especially favoured by the Chinese and the Imperial family. These short-legged and short-headed dogs were mentioned in the Zhou Dynasty of 1000BC. The Buddhist lion was actually a palace dog with lion-like characteristics (Ong Hean-Tatt. 1993, p. 176).

An interesting story relates the following, “One day, some eunuchs of the court, made the startling discovery that the King of Beasts resembled nothing on earth so much as - the emperor’s own small Pekinese dog, if not in size. A little skilful shaving of the tail - and he stood forth a miniaturized lion indeed!” (Dixey, 1931, p. 8). This story, whether truth or fiction, or a little bit of both, along with Ong’s belief, may go some way towards explaining the “foreign” features of the lion in Chinese art, and the amazing course of transmutation of the Pekinese dog into a lion, from early-on in the imperial court.

The history of the Pekinese dog, according to one theory, can be traced back to the Byzantine Empire or the later Roman Empire, at which time the hairy Maltese dogs were famed for their intelligence and had a rather grotesque appearance (Dixey, 1931, p. 23). The hairy dog was imported into China, perhaps even before the Christian era, when trade was opened up by the overland caravan traffic across Central Asia, between the Roman Empire and the northern part of present-day China, which constituted the Chinese Empire of those times. Another view suggests that the history of the Pekinese is a more complicated mystery, and that there is no clear-cut history of its origin (Lytton, 1911, pp. 13-60). In any case, after many centuries of careful breeding in China, the Pekinese spaniel was for the first time captured and smuggled out of China (likely from Yuan Mingyuan – Garden of Gardens or translated as Garden of Perfect Brightness) and appeared in the West, in England, in 1860. Although these first specimens are not believed to have been of the first-class animals of the Chinese imperial court, such as the “Looty”, a Pekiness dog of Queen Victoria (Lytton, 1911, p. 248), they were a faithful enough embodiment of the major characteristics of the Pekinese dog. These cute little dogs were very much admired. They had a sturdy, heavy little body. Their chest was broad and their waist narrow. They had solid, bowed forelegs, a broad head with a low brow, and drooping ear-fringes. The profuse rolling mane added majesty to the animal’s diminutive stature. It was a real lion in miniature.

During the Yuan period, the Pekinese spaniel is known to have been the object of excessive reverence. It was said that the dog had been kept secretly in the imperial court for centuries because of its likeliness to the sacred lion (Collier, 1921, p. 98).⁷ No specimens were shown in public in China. Even one of the richest collections of Mammalia, in Tianjin, did not have an example until 1933 (Jakovleff, 1933, pl.11). Here we may look at a photograph of a Pekinese Dog which belonged to a private pet-owner in Beijing (No. 84). It is a good example of the kind bred by the Beijing Pet Institute, which originated from the stock bred in the court for generations.

Although it is no longer possible to say what the original, pure blooded Pekinese Dog was like, this animal retains its ancestors' major characteristics if we compare it with the description in *Southern Village Plough-Break Records*. Another example of the Pekinese Dog can be found in a painting on silk held in the British Museum (No. 85).⁸

In Tibetan Buddhism, the faithful lion that trotted with dog-like devotion at the heels of Buddha was able to diminish or increase its size at will (Dixey, 1931, p. 28). The photograph of the Panchen Lama with a Pekinese dog on either side of him is a good example of the Tibetan recognition of that dog's spiritual association with the lion-like dog (Bell, 1946, p. 34). The Tibetan "Lion Dog", is called by the Chinese name in Tibet, *shizi* 獅子 (lion). Grünwedei pointed out that Tibetan dogs were in fact the prototype of what was called the "Corea Dog" (Grünwedei, 1901, p. 51). This not only proves the early existence of the lion-like Pekinese Dog at a time prior to the introduction of Lamaism into China, but also strongly suggests its use as a model for the Chinese lion, and its substitution for the real lion during the very earliest period of Buddhism in China.

Artistically, linguistically and religiously, the Chinese lion has been proven to be closely linked to the canine rather than the feline. Making comparisons, according to the above-mentioned historical records, with the Pekinese dog, the fact that the depiction of the Chinese lion is often closely modelled on the Pekinese spaniel, rather than any live lion, is probably how the lion in Chinese art eventually overcame the impossible "handicap" of the animal's non-existence in China, - by becoming a dog, despite the biological impossibility! It was then called the "lion-dog", the Pekinese. The lion and dog at long last became one animal, in such a dramatic combination of, and exchange between, two utterly differently zoological families.

⁷ There is, however, no clear indication in *History of the Yuan* about this piece of information.

⁸ The Pekinese Dog in this painting is an illustration of the animal in the Qing court. Using fine techniques and detailed depiction, it gives a beautiful rendering of the Pekinese Dog.

Nott has pointed out that, with the advent of the Song Dynasty, the development of the jade lion was influenced by the lion of Buddhism. By the time of the Ming Dynasty, the dog-type of jade lion-carving was giving way to that of the Buddhist lion. It was a transition period of jade-carving during the Yuan period when the jade lion and lion-dog were both in vogue. By the Qing Dynasty, the dog form was definitely that of the Pekinese type, and becoming more dominant (Nott, 1962, p. 84).

- *Tigers (8)*

In *Classic of Changes*, the most ancient of all Chinese books, there is an account concerning the tiger's representing autumn (*Yi Jing*, Zhou Dynasty, p. 56). This is probably because the animal is known to do its most deadly work - extensive hunting, in the autumn. The mating-season starts in November, and continues until the following February (Zheng Shengwu, et al, 1994, p. 106). The animal is mostly actively hunting for food during this period of time.

The ancient Chinese considered the tiger to be the king of the beasts (Xun Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 210).⁹ Intriguingly, the tiger has a sign on its forehead which may be taken as an indication of this kingship, this being three horizontal lines with a vertical linking line through them, which together forms the Chinese character 王 (No. 45). This character, pronounced *wang*, means "king". When the tiger was depicted in jade, this sign of the king on its forehead was often clearly presented, as in Fig. 5-32a. The tiger is a swift, powerful and ferocious animal. This is probably why the animal's flesh, blood and bones have had attributed to them a range of medicinal properties by the Chinese, hoping to restore health, or to increase courage and strength.¹⁰ It used to be a special challenge to stalk and capture the tiger. Its

⁹ The lion seems to have shared status with the tiger. The tiger was indigenous, however, whereas the lion was foreign.

¹⁰ Parts of the tiger have throughout Chinese history been, and still are, believed, to have great value as medicine. Its bone, for example, is thought to be able to cure human arthritis (Zheng Shewu, 1994, p. 106). Its penis, when it has been soaked in alcohol, is said to be a medicine able to cure human impotence. The "remedy value" of the tiger has made the animal almost extinct in many parts of China, due to constant hunting through the centuries.

reputation of being an elusive and dangerous beast made its capture the highest achievement a hunter could accomplish. It is recorded in *History of the Yuan* that tigers were paid as tribute to the Yuan imperial court as a way of proclaiming hunters' great skill (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 674).

In addition to the tiger's having a much-admired natural power and strength, and to the medical properties attributed to it, it also had spiritual or supernatural functions (Sun Qiuping, 1993, p. 52). The animal was believed to have the ability to ward off every kind of ill fortune and every form of calamity, which might befall one (Ball, 1969, p. 18). It was said that the tiger had a defensive effect against evil (Morant, 1890, p. 123), and was the symbol in Nature of majesty and dignity, owing to its position as king of the wild animals (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 110). The Mongols routinely awarded tiger-amulets to the military officials of the emperor, to encourage them carry out their military activities fearlessly (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 4625). For them, the tiger on the amulet symbolised courage and military prowess.

The first depiction of a tiger shown in this thesis was that on Fan Wenhui's jade *ya* (Fig. 4-10). This was an object specially granted by the Yuan Emperor as a token expressing praises for Fan Wenhui, a surrendered Chinese military general, and designed to encourage him to serve the Mongols. Thereafter, the tiger appears almost exclusively in the jades of Autumn Mountain. This type of jade is typical of Mongol jade-fashion, characteristically depicting the scenery of autumn, including animals such as tiger, deer and bear. It symbolised autumn hunting, generally with a naturalistic presentation of the beauty of animals and plants in the autumn, without much supernatural significance.

Thus, the most distinctive and typical way of rendering of the tiger in jades of the Yuan period was in extremely naturalistic fashion, full of life. This can be compared with its depiction during the previous dynasties when it was often highly stylised, sometimes to an almost unrecognisable extent. The tiger in Yuan jades was depicted to an almost anatomical degree of accuracy. This trend seems to have started during

the Liao and Jin Dynasties, and reached its peak during Yuan times. The animal itself was normally portrayed with detailed depiction of its striped fur, strong legs, pricked ears and piercing eyes. The illustration in Fig. 5-35 is a very good example of this. The tiger in this jade is depicted with its ears raised, to indicate that it is alert and ready to pounce. Another tiger, illustrated in Fig. 5-31b, shows a trait of natural behaviour displayed by only the female tiger (Chapter Five). These biological details of the life of the tiger are vividly conveyed in the jades, and successfully glorify the dignity, power and beauty of the animal.

The jade tiger of Yuan times was often rendered with trees or deer, sometimes with birds, the sun and rocks, all in very naturalistic style. The result was a brilliant jade-picture of autumn or autumn hunting.

- **Bears (1)**

Two species of bears have been recorded as native to northern China, the Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*) and the Asiatic Black Bear (*Selenarctos thibetanus*) (Gao Yiaoting, 1987, p. 78). They have much in common in terms of habitat, diet and reproduction. To the Mongols, the bear was a familiar animal, although it appears to have been depicted in jade less often than the tiger. Only one example of it is considered in this thesis (Fig. 5-34). On this single jade object, it is not a lone animal, but appears along with an eagle. When the eagle and bear were placed together in the same motif, both animals seem to have been used to represent something more profound than they themselves singly (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 149). The word for eagle in Chinese is pronounced *ying* 鷹, and the word for bear, *xiong* 熊. When *ying* and *xiong* are pronounced together, they are a homophone for the word *yingxiong* 英雄 meaning hero). The original meaning of the eagle and the bear is lost completely in this sound. It is for this reason that the two creatures are depicted together in Chinese art, their images being thus “borrowed” to convey the notion of this latter homophonic word (Chapter Five). In Zhou Nanquan’s opinion, the motif of eagle and bear did not appear before the Ming Dynasty (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 149). He also argues, however, that this particular jade of the eagle and the bear is a Liao or Jin product,

because it shows the tiger sitting under an oak tree, a typical setting for the Autumn Mountain Jades (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 242). His contradictory argument includes a hypothesis that this jade eagle and bear could not have been made later than the Yuan Dynasty. It has been shown earlier that craftsmanship in the Yuan court was in many ways influenced by Chinese concepts. It would have been natural, especially when there were Chinese craftsmen working at court, for the court to adopt the Chinese idea of depicting the eagle and bear in order to represent the concept of hero. As discussed throughout the thesis, the Chinese fashion of using homophones, “punning”, was widely practised in art before and during the Yuan Dynasty. Because there is a tiger on the jade, and because its depiction in the Autumn Mountain motif sharply declined during the Ming Dynasty, while not completely ceasing (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 242), that is evidence enough for it to reasonably be suggested that this jade was a Yuan product, rather than a Ming one. Later, this motif slowly came to attract interest again, and a new fashion for it arose, but that was not until very late in the Qing Dynasty,

The bear is occasionally found depicted on stone slabs of ancient Chinese tombs (Nott, 1962, p. 81). This tradition cannot be said to have extended to the Mongols, since so far no imperial Mongol tombs have been discovered. As far as the jade bear is concerned, the imperial collections show that the bear-form did not appear very frequently during the many centuries after the Han Dynasty, only a small number of jade bears existing in Beijing and Taipei (Yang Boda, 1998, Interview; Deng Shuping, 1999, Interview). It is to be hoped that future archaeological research may bring to light further depiction of this animal in jade, or provide further insights into why it is so rare.

- ***Deer (25)***

An extremely naturalistic style seems to have been the predominant fashion in the depiction of deer during Yuan times, and certainly in the Autumn Mountain motif. Deer are popular animals all over the world, and twenty species of them have been reported and described as native to China (Sheng Helin, 1992, p. 1). Six species of

deer are recorded as living in the north of China, ones which the northern nomads could have hunted (Sheng Heling, 1992, p. 1). These are: Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*), Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*), Père David's Deer (*Elaphurus davidianus*), Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), Moose (*Alces alces*) and Reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*) (Figs. Sika Deer, Red Deer, Père David's Deer, Roe Deer, Moose and Reindeer). (Their figures are presented at the end of the Illustrations). These share a number of common biological features. The male is normally larger than the female in size. In five of the species, it is only the adult stag that has splendid antlers, for display and combat. The exception is the Reindeer, of which the female also has magnificent antlers. All deer seem to prefer relatively quiet places to live, in surroundings of shrub-meadows, birch, pine or alder trees and oak forests (Sheng Heling, 1992, pp. 202-256). Each of these characteristics can be found faithfully depicted in the jades considered in this thesis.

It has been said in folk-tales that the deer has a life span of a thousand years before its skin turns grey and, then, that in another five hundred years, its skin becomes white (Burkhardt, 1982, p. 50; Nott, 1962, p. 79). If this legend is to be found mainly in Chinese literature and folklore, the story of white-skinned deer is certainly also to be found in the most ancient Mongol record, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (*The Secret History of the Mongols*, 13th century, p. 1). The white-skinned deer was held to be the earliest ancestor of the tribe of Genghis Khan. In the *History of the Yuan*, it is also recorded that a white deer was paid in tribute to Emperor Chengzong in his third year of his reign, i.e. 1297 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1075). There is no doubt that this gift was made because of the historical and genealogical significance to the Yuan emperor of the animal.

Biologically, the white-skinned deer does exist, as an abnormality of coloration. Albinos can occur in most species of deer (Whitehead, 1972, p. 5). The white deer given as a gift to the Yuan emperor suggests that abnormalities such as these attracted a certain fascination and favour in the imperial court. Other abnormalities also attracted attention. Deer with beautiful antlers depicted, but also unconventional

forms such as deer without antlers, such as the one in Fig. 5-20. In China, only two species of deer have a natural lack of antlers in the male and the female: the Chinese Water-deer (*Hydropotes inermis*) of the Cervidae Family (Whitehead, 1993, p. 8), and the Siberian Musk-deer (*Moschus moschiferus*) of the Moschidae Family (Whitehead, 1993, p. 8). An additional variant from the norm is the Woodland Caribou, in which either sex will stop growing its antlers when malnutrition occurs early in life (Whitehead, 1993, p. 116). There is no absolute reason why artists and craftsmen could not have found and depicted “deformed” animals in jades at that time. The syndrome of the polled or hummel deer was obviously observed and depicted in jades. The animals portrayed were either one of the above or, perhaps less likely, immature fawns which were simply without their antlers yet. Another physical abnormality has been realistically depicted in the jade in Fig. 5-27, which instead of illustrating a deer with properly branched antlers shows one with a strange growth on its head. As discussed previously (Chapter Five), the model for this deer with such deformed antlers could have been some real-life deer, rather than some concoction of fantasy sporting *lingzhi*-shaped antlers, or “base of pearls” as the phenomenon was called in some literature (Xue Jie, 1993, p. 263). There is no evidence that the deformation of the antlers, caused by disease or hormone imbalance, was understood.¹¹ Never the less, these aberrations were naturalistically depicted in jade, as some sort of magical image but modelled from the wild.

For centuries the deer has always in China been taken as an emblem of long life, because this animal is regarded an animal of everlasting sex (*Er Ya*, Zhou Dynasty, Animal Section, p. 1-2). This could partially explain why its image is always related to Chinese Buddhism, a religion which believes life transmigration. It is several times recorded in the *History of the Yuan* that the deer was used as one of the most important animals for ritual ceremonies during prayers for long life (Song Lian, et al,

¹¹ The Peking Sika (*Cervus nippon mandarinus*) has antlers which, when still in velvet, constitute an important component of the Chinese pharmacopoeia. They are traded in the Chinese community all over the world, being used as an aphrodisiac (Anderson, 1934, p. 87; Li Shizhen, Ming Dynasty, p. 98). It would not be surprising, to find some ancient record to the effect that deformed antlers with a

1370, p. 1977) and prayers for good harvest (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1833), and to celebrate the coronation of the emperor (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1836).

- **Horses (3)**

The horse is a magnificent creature, and has been highly valued both in China and in Mongolia throughout history. Chinghiz Khan is said to have measured his territory in units each based on the amount of distance covered by a hundred days of horse travel (Zhong Ming, 1995, p. 168). It is recorded that he and his nobles always killed their horses in order not to let them be captured and humiliated by their enemies during what failures they met with in their military campaigns (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p.1337). The horse was the symbol of Mongol pride. The Manchu, descendants of the Jurchens of the Jin Dynasty, loved horses so much, that they used the image of the horse on their court dress (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 150). The sleeve-cuffs of the gowns worn by their officials were shaped like horses' hooves. This shape was a practical solution for helping keep the wearers warm in harsh weather.

The Mongolian Pony (*Equus przewalskii*) is considered to be the only species of horse indigenous to China, coming from Chinese Turkestan and western Mongolia (Macgregor-Morris, et al, 1983, p. 99). It is therefore not surprising that the horse depicted in art during Yuan times, especially in the Yuan court, was largely if not exclusively modelled on the Przewalski's horse. Nott has pointed out that "the type of horse portrayed at this period (7th century) is practically identical with the thickset Mongolian type" (Nott, 1962. p. 74). This horse is believed to be the only known kind of Chinese horse before the introduction of fresh blood from the West, say Central Asia during the former Han Dynasty (Yetts, 1934, p. 238).

It has been mentioned by a leading sinologist that a type of horse which was imported or paid as tribute to the Tang emperors was distinct in that it had "tiger markings" and "cel (*Muraenesox cinereus*) markings 縵纹 (Schafer, 1963, p. 61). It is still not

thick layer of velvet in the form of a *lingzhi*-shaped flower to wish a long life of the Yuan court, as the *lingzhi* is a symbol of longevity.

known for sure what this animal was. Schafer believed that the animal was perhaps the Asiatic Wild Ass (*Equus hemionus*) (Schafer, 1963, p. 61). In recent publications, this animal has been identified as the Mongolian Wild Horse, or Przewalski's horse (Kolbas, 1997, p. 38). In fact, both the wild Asiatic Ass and the Mongolian wild horse share the feature of a vaguely or lightly coloured striped belly (Hanák, 1992, p. 235).

One of the most impressive records of the Mongolian Pony in Chinese history is the six horses depicted in the tomb of the Tang Emperor Taizong (r. 618-626). Apart from the great importance of this monument as a masterpiece of stone sculpture, it provides a valuable document as to the type of horse used at that period of time.¹² Each of the horses is fully described in accompanying inscriptions on the tomb, its colour and name being given, and also the battle in which each was ridden. Even the details of their wounds are recorded (Emperor Taizong, 637, Tomb stone tablets).¹³ It had been noted that the type of horse portrayed during this period is almost identical to the thickset Mongolian horse (Nott, 1962, p. 74). The bridle and saddling also appear to be the same as that which was used by the Mongols during the Yuan period.

The most admired feature of the Mongolian Pony was that it could survive on the poorest feeding and could endure journeys longer than anything that the European horseman could imagine as possible. During military campaigns, the Mongol Ponies were used to carry heavy objects, to transport goods, and sometimes to provide milk and food for Chinghiz Khan's soldiers, all the way from their homeland in the Gobi Desert to wherever they might be (Huang Yuren, 1993, p. 195). Although the animal might look humble, it was tough and had stamina. The Mongols had every reason to praise their beloved horse, it being a magnificently sturdy all-purpose mount, beast of

¹² These six horses were carved in relief on six stone tablets, and depict the animals he rode in his victorious battles, with accompanying eulogies in verse praising their attributes. The six tablets were erected at the tomb of Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty. The details can be found in Ferguson's article (Ferguson, 1931, pp. 61-71).

burden and indeed source of nourishment and alcohol, in poems and folklore, and to depict it in paintings and in the precious stone, jade (Chapter Six). It was totally natural for the Mongols, throughout their history, to depict their horse in art.

And yet, interestingly, the Mongolian Pony, or indeed any horse, does not seem to have been a dominant image in jade during the Yuan period. Despite the horse's great physical qualities, its proven historical importance, and its numerous appearances in many other forms of art, it is seldom seen in jade. Exhaustive search for jade horses carved during Yuan times has uncovered only two pieces with convincing Yuan characteristics (Fig. 4-14 & Fig. 6-3). Despite a search of all major jade collections throughout the world (Appendix: Museums and Institutes), including the Museum Rietberg Zurich Collection, widely recognised as one of the richest collections of Chinese jades in the world, revealed that it had only one jade horse dated to the Yuan or later (Marie-Fleur Burkart-Bauer, 1986, p. 83). The other was included in a recent exhibition of jade animals held in Hong Kong, which had gathered jade animals from the most genuine and reputable collectors and collections of the highest prestige in the world, including those of Beijing and Taiwan. Among a total of 181 jade animals, there was only one jade horse dated to the Yuan Dynasty (Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1996, p. 152). Even this horse is introduced in the exhibition catalogue with some uncertainty as regards its date.¹⁴ In the same exhibition, there were two other horses dated, with similar imprecision, as from the Jin to the Yuan Dynasty (Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1996, p. 146); and another four horses, which were dated from the Yuan or Ming Dynasty (Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1996, pp. 151-155). Taken together, there are only 7 horses which seemingly might have something to do with the Yuan period. Furthermore, in the catalogue of the imperial jade collection in the Palace Museum, Beijing, no single jade horse of

¹³ Four of these six horse tomb stones are now in Shanxi Provincial Museum, and the rest two are claimed in the University Museum, Philadelphia, USA (Ferguson, 1931, p. 71).

¹⁴ This is a jade object of two frolicking horses carved. The subject of two horses in combat or biting at each other can be found in paintings of the Song period, as mentioned by Watt (Watt, 1980, no.23). The combat motif becomes in later periods one more in the nature of playful sporting. This is the only reason for dating this jade horse as a later version (Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1996, p. 152). Strictly speaking, "later version" in this case does not necessarily have to mean the Yuan period.

the Yuan Dynasty is listed (Yang Boda, 1993a, pp. 106-132), with one exception, the one illustrated in Fig. 4-14, which is not depicted in a manner truly characteristic of a horse of hundred percent Yuan style (Chapter Four).

The horse depicted in Fig. 4-14, although still looking like a horse, with a naturalistically depicted head, mane and overall body-form, also has flame-shaped wings, and is galloping amid waves. According to some theories, the motif of the “sea-horse” symbolises the sun (Ball, 1969, p. 104). The relationship between the sun and the sea is identical to that between fire and water. Without more historical and cultural supporting evidence, it remains premature to surmise that the horse on the Great Jade Urn signifies an ancient Chinese sea-sun concept. An alternative theory appears more convincing. The horse, with certain characteristics natural to an aquatic animal, such as a scaled body, and galloping in the sea, represents the fascination and fear that the Mongol land-based nomad always felt concerning the sea (Qiu Fuhai, 1994, p. 248). It may symbolise the Mongols’ wish that they might be helped by their horses to overpower and conquer the dark and unpredictable waves. Thus the horse in this form seems to symbolise the passage from one ambience to another (Whittick, 1960, p. 199). Like the other 12 animals on the Great Jade Urn, this horse constitutes a medium or vehicle conveying an existential message, and is depicted in the typically bold and unconstrained style with which the Mongols customarily expressed their view of the world.

The horse illustrated in Fig. 6-3 has some resemblance to the Mongolian Pony.¹⁵ Its groom is in Mongol costume (Chapter Six). In addition to its carving-style, this jade object (paperweight) does have some Mongol identity, although its original provenance is no longer traceable (Zhang Guangwen, 1998, Interview).

Chronologically, the late Song period certainly may be included. Thus, this jade object of two horses at play could have been made in the late Song Dynasty.

¹⁵ Questions are sometimes posed as to the authenticity of the jade shown in Jade Fig.6-3, and therefore as to its true identity, purely because it is not in the Palace Museum Collection (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, Interview).

Thus in the Imperial Collection in the Palace Museum there are only three horses (depicted on two jade pieces) which we can say with some degree of certainty were carved during the Yuan period. Why, then, is the jade horse of the Yuan period so rare?

The horse, having a hoof comprising a single digit, is relegated in China to the category of odd numbers (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 148). It is the seventh of the zodiac animals. In a culture which, like the Chinese one, favours things in pairs, the odd number is regarded as somewhat inferior to the even number. The horse, being swift and spirited, is also considered to have a swift and thus a short life, and, because it often changes its moods, to be volatile and inconsistent (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 152). In literature, as for instance in Yuan Non-dramatic Arias (*sangu*),¹⁶ the horse of the times was sometimes depicted as a creature suffering lots of misery and full of complaints. Here are some lines of one:

谁知我汉马功，谁想我垂缰义，谁怜我千里眼，谁识我千钧力。(Liu Shizhong, Yuan Dynasty, p. 680).

Who knows the fine deeds of me this sweating horse!
Who thinks at all of my dangling-bridle noble honour!
Who has sympathy for me and my far-sighted ability!
Who appreciates my "ten-ton" mighty strength!

This non-drama song of Yuan times straightforwardly describes the inferior and oppressed life of the horse. It shows the other side of the coin, not that of the noble and honoured war-steed, but that of the neglected nag. In other media, though, the horse was depicted as a graceful, much-admired animal. The painting *Two Horses* by one of the most famous Yuan painters, Ren Renfa, conveys a mixed allegorical message by means of horses. The painting portrays two horses, one of which is very healthy and strong, the other being thin and tired. The painter wrote on the painting:

¹⁶ The Yuan *sangu*, "Yuan non-dramatic *qu*", was a type of song verse popular in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, with tonal metrical patterns modelled on tunes drawn from folk music and other sources.

世之大夫，廉濫不同而肥瘠系焉。能瘠一身而肥一國，不失其為廉；苟肥一己而疾萬民，豈不于濫之耻。(Ling Shuzhong, 1981, no. 111).

The ministers of this world differ in their honesty and corruption, and fatness and leanness are connected with this. If one is able to keep one's single self-lean, but fatten the whole nation, one is not going astray from honesty. If one fattens one's sole self, but makes the multitude of ordinary people lean, that surely puts one in the peril of the disgrace of corruption, doesn't it.

The painter used the two horses as a metaphor for two kinds of high government official. Ironically, the sleek beautiful-looking horse in this painting refers to the corrupted official, and the physically worn-out horse stands for the hard-working gentleman. When the depiction of the horse was given such a political message, like any other similar metaphors, it may well have been a highly sensitive matter, especially in the Yuan court.¹⁷ Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322)¹⁸ is an example of a painter closely associated with the Yuan court. He was the most famous painter during the Yuan Dynasty, and he also wrote poems on his horse paintings. One of them reads:

子幼好画马，自谓颇近物之性。

(I) have loved painting horses since I was a child, and feel that I have come very close to capturing the spirit of the creature.

He resigned from his work in the court and went into retirement, despite that he was very much in favour with the Yuan Emperor and was experiencing a golden period in the court (Ling Shuzhong, 1981, no. 106). He withdrew from governmental and

¹⁷ Image of horse was thought to express the self-image of the Chinese scholar after the Yuan conquest changed the value structure. The Chinese scholars felt condemned living in a world in which their art was not appreciated. The horse, a traditional symbol of the scholar-official, and paintings or/and sculptures (eg. jade carving of horses) was an apt representation of the scholar-official's fate under a dynasty that revered horsemanship rather than scholarship and art (Dunlop, et al, 1997, p. 101).

¹⁸ Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322) was from present-day Wuxin County in Zhejiang Province. His cognomen name was Songxue Daoren. He was an 11th generation descendant of the great-grandson of the first Song emperor, Taizu (r. 960-976). In 1287, Zhao Mengfu was called to court by the Yuan Emperor, and began his service there. Due to his great talent and the quality of his work, he was given an important position as a high official in the court. In 1312, however, he decided to retire (Ling Shuzhong, 1981, no. 106).

urban society in 1312 to live in solitude (Ling Shuzhong, 1981, no. 106). His sudden retirement is one of the mysteries of Chinese art-history. Could it have been something to do with his portrayal of the horse, that never quite tamed animal, through which he perhaps expressed aspects of his own sturdily independent personality?

There is no hard evidence to show that these two famous and fine Yuan artists created paintings of the Mongolian Pony. They were both Chinese, Zhao a descendant of the Sung Dynasty imperial family, and they painted non-Mongolian horses. It is conceivable that, in doing so, they “implanted” some kind of political message in all their horses, which may have touched a political nerve throughout the court, where horse depiction of any kind was a sensitive matter, whether in painting, jade or any other form of art. It is conceivable that, because the Yuan rulers were a horsemen, the image of the horse created at that time by the Chinese artists may have conveyed a form of controlled resentment from the Chinese towards the Mongol rulers? It would need more archaeological and historical evidence to prove such a hypothesis, but the reasons underlying why horse-depiction in jade were apparently produced in such a small number in the Yuan court needs some exploring, however conjectural, and deserves a thorough on-going investigation. On the other hand, it is possible that, as mooted in the Chapter One, there may be other jade horses out there, waiting to be properly dated to the Yuan Dynasty, but this has not yet happened.

- *Camels (I)*

There is only one jade camel considered this thesis (Fig. 6-4). The animal had a myriad uses among the Mongols. It was an important beast of burden, used to transport heavy goods cheaply over large distances (Polo, 13th century, p. 61). It came bearing the goods of Turkestan and Arabia into the East, and was stabled by the imperial palace so that it could take part in the grand ceremonies of the realm. Naturally, camels were employed for military purposes, as may be seen from the historiographical reference to when, in the year 1330, “100 camels and 300 oxen were bought to fill the needs of the troops in the imperial suite” (Song Lian, et al,

1370, p. 1800). Most probably, these were for the transportation of supplies. When it figured in the great processions of court, the animals were decorated with jades of all colours, and bore drums and percussionists who played music (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1974).

The Mongols valued their camels so highly that severe penalties were inflicted on anyone who injured any. It is recorded in the *History of the Yuan*: "... if any herdsman should feloniously cut a camel's hump, he shall be put to death" (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 3076). The animal's hump was long reckoned by the Mongols to be an important store of edible and nutritious fat (Wen Huanran, 1995, p. 258). Other parts of the animal were also used for its meat and milk (Namujila, 1995, p. 72).

The techniques used to domesticate the Bactrian Camel are recorded as having come into Mongolian grassland after the Xixia State (situated in present-day Ningxia Moslem Autonomous Region) was defeated by the Mongols in 1209 (Zhou Yongyi, 1987, p. 276). The Mongols in the Yuan Dynasty had many institutions which contributed directly or indirectly to the maintenance of the imperial camels, both those in herds and those in stables (Schafer, 1950, p. 192). Families of camel-herders were attached to the various royal residences, as may be seen from the recorded instance of an imperial gift to alleviate the poverty of the camel-herders attached to the court (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 605).

Although the only jade camel in this thesis had originally been labelled as the two-humped camel (Forsyth, et al, 1994, p. 340), it is indeed a beautiful depiction of a Dromedary Camel, having only one hump. It is true that the only type of camel that the Mongols bred was the two-humped camel, the Bactrian Camel (Whitfield, 1985, p. 132). The latter is a descendant of the camel which originated in North America and migrated about 3 million years ago across the Bering Sea Strait to Asia and Continental Europe (Wen Huanran, 1995, p. 258). It is readily identified by its pair of humps, one behind the other, short legs and massive physique. Its one-humped cousin, the Dromedary Camel evolved further West, in Arabia (Whitfield, 1985, p.

132). Two other family members, the Guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*) and the Vicuna (*Vicugna vicugna*), live in South America and have no hump at all.

It was known to the Mongols that the Dromedary Camel came from Islamic countries in the Middle East or Central Asia (Gong Yu, et al, 1992, pp. 624-630). There are five entries in the *History of the Yuan* concerning the tribute of camels brought by embassies from foreign countries. Some comments were made

少所见多所怪，见骆驼以为马肿背。(Gong Yu, et al, 1992, p. 625)

Those of little experience are often puzzled, and when they saw the camels, they thought they were horses with swollen backs.

The comment strongly suggests that the camels mentioned in this record as sent as a gift to the court were not the kind of camel with which the Mongols were familiar. Had they been the two-humped Bactrian Camel with which the Mongols were familiar, they would not have been mistaken for swollen-backed horses.

In the *History of the Yuan*, dated a few years after the reference to the “swollen-backed horses”, there is another record, which reads:

藩王不赛因遣使献玉及独峰驼。(Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 672)
Foreign prince Busaiyin¹⁹ sent envoys to with gifts to the emperor of jade and one-humped camels.

Here the “one-humped camel” is clearly recorded.²⁰ The fact that this animal was perceived by the Mongol administrators in China of the 13th century as a “swollen-backed horse” strongly suggests that the Dromedary Camel was little known there, and was seen as an exotic animal by the Mongols. Besides depiction of the

¹⁹ Busaiyin was the ninth khan of the khanate situated in present-day Iran (Gong Yu, et al, 1992, p. 630).

dromedary in cave paintings and mentions of it historical records of the period, a pottery Dromedary Camel has been unearthed in 1988 from a tomb in Xi'an City (No. 86). The camel is represented in a naturalistic style, and shows that the potter must have had skill and a keen sense of observation, for him to be able to make the animal appear so nearly life-like.

There is no jade Bactrian Camel among the jades considered for this thesis, this lacuna being due to uncertainties and conflicts of dating.²¹ Accurate depiction of the Bactrian Camel are, however, found on a silver-plated seal of the Yuan Dynasty (Fig. No. 54). This demonstrates that the Mongols were beyond question quite capable of grasping the distinctive characteristics of the Bactrian, and of depicting it naturalistically.

- *Sheep (3)*

Although the sheep, as one of the Mongols' "five snouts", was vitally important to them as a source of food, and was much appreciated in Chinese and Mongol art throughout history (Bartholomew, 1995a, p. 99), there are hardly any jade specimens with archaeological evidence attributing them directly to the Yuan period. Some scholars believe that there is a severe lack of evidence for accurately dating any jades made after the Wudai Dynasties (907-960) bearing goats or sheep (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 167). Such jade depictions are either very briefly sketched, showing no distinctive features of any particular period, or are very ordinary, without much artistic flair.

Among these jade sheep, however, there are often seen animals with large horns like those found on wild mountain-sheep. Three jade rams included in this thesis are of

²⁰ The one-humped camel is also found in the Yinshan Cave Paintings (Gao Shanlin, 1980, p. 7), which were dated to the earliest stage of the Langshan Cave Paintings of the Yinshan Mountain Range, although they have not been ascertained, owing to lack of archaeological evidence.

²¹ No single jade camel is depicted in the jades given in the catalogue of the Palace Museum, Beijing. There are, however, a few jade camels in the Imperial Collection of the Palace Museum. Details and pictures of them have not been published, solely because of various ambiguities in their carving-style which are said to make their dating impossible (Zhang Guanwen, 1999, Interview).

this type (Fig. 3-1, Fig. 3-2 and Fig. 3-3). There was a trend, linked to a period around the 13th century, and seen in bronzes, of depicting rams with large curved horns (Munsterberg, 1986, p. 39). Sheep in No. 13 is an example of this type of depiction in a metal sculpture. The shape of its horns suggests that it is either the wild sheep known as the Argali or the Ibex (No. 7). Both of these animals inhabit northern China. Their magnificent horns were much admired, and frequently depicted in art (Chapter Three).

In Chinese literature, the lamb is a symbol of amiable, obedient and filial piety, as it kneels to receive nourishment from its mother (Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 145). It is impossible to depict this touchingly filial-looking behaviour by means of a single sheep, and this has led to problems of species identification. The jade pendant in Fig. 7-35, for example, was first described as “lamb, a filial child” (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 167). Five years later, this animal of the Bovidae family was, intriguingly, reclassified, as a deer (Xu Lin, 1999, p. 75)! The change suggests an academic reluctance to attribute the symbolism of filial piety to a small-horned wild sheep, which could have been confusing and might have caused misinterpretation. Obviously, the species identity of the recumbent horned animal remains in doubt, as to whether it is a deer or a lamb, but the question of its symbolism has now been avoided by the new labelling. The fact that not a single jade sheep has been shown in any of Beijing Palace Museum catalogues in recent years may also imply general complications of dating and/or of animal identification. However, the image of lamb or sheep is often found in other forms of art, such as paintings, textile and porcelain, where it can be clearly applied.

The three jade wild sheep considered in this thesis are discussed so as to assist understanding of Mongol admiration of the animal's beauty, rather than to call attention to their jade-carving style. In fact, none of the three jade sheep is from the Palace Museum collections. They have no imperial documents or other evidence whatsoever to indicate their provenance, apart from some trace of the jades' colours

and some reported descriptions (Chapter Three). For this reason, they are not employed in this thesis as a major set of examples for Yuan style and fashion.

- ***Monkeys (I)***

The monkey in Chinese fables was believed to be able to control hobgoblins, witches, elves, etc. (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 160). Thus, it would confer health, protection and success by warding off evil spirits. The Monkey King from the novel *Journey to the West* was, in his popular apotheosis, drives away or block the evil influences of spirits (Wu Cheng'en, Ming Dynasty). He was a symbol of human intelligence, of man's skill and resourcefulness. One of the most famous novels in Chinese literature, this work relates the story of the good-natured if mischievous monkey's helping the Buddhist monk Tang Seng travel to the West to collect Buddhist scriptures. The monkey is also one of the most favoured zodiac creatures, being perceived as close to man because of its physical appearance and social structures (Hua Huilun, et al, 1991, p. 15). The monkey has the ability to express happiness, anger, anxiety and other kinds of human-like feelings. With all these higher attributes, it was to be expected, therefore, that the monkey would be carved in jade and buried with the dead to protect their souls and drive away evil spirits. The agate monkey considered in this thesis an example of such (Fig. 7-34).

In Nature, there are four species of primates reported as living in China, ones with small tails such as the one represented in Fig. 7-34 (Xia Wupin, 1988, p. 20-24). Only the Tibetan Macaque (*Macaca thibetana*) living in and around Jiangsu Province, however, resembles the features of our agate monkey (No. 98). It has a large head and red face. The male has a beard, and a short tail not longer than 10cm (Shi Guangfu, et al, 1996, p. 18). Some adult Tibetan Macaques show a minutely annulated appearance, especially over the front of their body (Allen, 1938, p. 290). It has brown fur on most of its body, except its chest and abdomen, which are creamy grey in colour (Xia Wupin, 1988, p. 22). Its present habitat is recorded as Sichuan, Hubei, Zhejiang and Fujian provinces. Although Wuxi, where the agate monkey was

unearthed, is not included in this area of present distribution, the city lies to the south of the River Yangtze and on the very border of Zhejiang Province.

Monkey-worship is believed to have existed in China since the Tang Dynasty (Edmunds, 1934, p. 498). This is partly no doubt because of the importance of the monkey in Indian and other Buddhist traditions imported into China, and its frequent and lively appearance in Chinese popular literature and entertainment. A monkey sculpture found in Fujian Province has presented some religious significance of the animal, and its surprisingly similar posture of the agate monkey in this thesis (No. 99). The earliest monkey forms in jade are said, however, to date from the Song Dynasty (Nott, 1962, p. 88). There are many monkeys in the imperial collections (Zhang Guangwen, 1998, Interview). During the Yuan Dynasty, it was forbidden for commoners to use jade (Chapter Seven). This may be one of the important reasons why jades of mammals from non-imperial collections are not found in large numbers.

- *Pig(1)*

There is one pig - a wild boar - in this thesis (Fig. 4-14). It is carved among waves on the Great Jade Urn, with a pair of wing-like decorations (Chapter Four).

The boar (*Sus scrofa*) is indigenous to Asia (Baker, et al, 1954, p. 56), and in China its fossils have been discovered and dated to 18 million years ago (Sun Bo, 1995, p. 57). It is one of the Chinese zodiac animals. It was also once believed that the Chinese people started from a pig tribe called *zhu Wei* (猪韦), as indicated in some ancient records (Lu Ji, et al, Wudai Dynasty, p. 313). This animal, so closely associated with humans' food-provision, was also one of the twelve creatures used in the traditional Chinese cyclical system of designating years, for dating and, more especially, for fortune-telling (Nott, 1936, p. 84). It is therefore often found in art with the attributes of a deity. It was frequently depicted in early jades. For example, the dead were given a jade pig to hold in each hand. It represented the pious provision of a meat-supply for the dead person in after-life. The animal is also employed in Chinese traditional pharmacy for the hyodeoxycholic acid from its bile,

which is believed to be good for relieving internal heat (Huo Ziming, et al, 1989, p. 953). The pig is described in some Chinese literature as “the black warrior” or as “the military officer”, because of its savage and ferocious nature (Ball, 1969, p. 125). The wild boar is certainly recorded in modern writings as able to charge an elephant, and sometimes even to give the tiger a hard fight (Baker, et al, 1954, p. 57).

The boar is believed to have been one of the animal totems of the ancient Mongol tribes (Tan Khoon Yong, 1993, p. 24). It was certainly worshipped by the Nandiwalas, a nomadic tribal people in Southern India as their ancestor (Malhotra, 1988, p. 137).

In India, the pig is worshipped by the Hindus, who believe that a boar among other 9 incarnations of the god on earth at different periods under the guise of an animal or a human being, rescued Earth from some great peril (Renou, 1962, p. 37). It is this boar which is known as Varahi, the third incarnation of Vishnu (Ball, 1969, p. 131) which was worshipped as a metamorphosis of the sun and the source of all life. The worship of Vishnu reveals the agreeable and happy aspects of Hinduism (Renou, 1962, p. 37).

In Tibet, the boar is one of the representatives and worshipped figures in Tibetan Buddhism (Ball, 1969, p. 131) known as Tibetan Lamaism, which was the most influential and dominant religion during the Mongol period in the Yuan court (Chapter Three). Tibetan Buddhism was penetrated by the Indian Buddhism around 7th century AD (Tian Huqing, 1992, p. 70). However, Hinduism in India, like Buddhism or Jainism or any other religious sects there, at their sophisticated level become very complicated. Any one god or deity or doctrine of these religions are likely to be the result of a long history of splitting or coalescence (Malhotra, 1988, p. 131). In another word, Tibetan could have picked up gods, deities, and doctrines for their Lamaism from religions mixed with not only Indian Buddhism, but also

Hinduism, Jainism and any other beliefs. The cult of the boar in Lamaism could have been a result, originally from Hinduism.²²

As an intimate follower, the Mongols therefore could have well chosen the boar, like their Tibetan religious leader, to worship and admire its supernatural power of rescuing the earth from the most remote past. Its fearsome look depicted on the Great Jade Urn and its scaled body and a pair of wings have enhanced its divine power and attributes to the deity.

Let me now briefly summarise this section on jade mammals, which are small in number and fairly restricted in species range. The lion (the term here includes the lion-dog) is a conventional animal depicted throughout history in China, and its form was not exceptional during the Yuan Dynasty. Its foreign identity did not affect its popularity in art, and the probable “substitution” of the lion-dog for the lion was no doubt used to combine these two animals into one kind. The tiger and the deer were also largely employed to represent the hunting scenes. Together with the image of the bear, they formed a special subject, one particularly favoured during the Yuan Dynasty. The horse and the camel jades are good examples of paperweights. Each of them has a groom, which has provided a vital clue of the two jades’ Mongol identity. It would have been almost impossible to date the pieces from the animal itself. Although there are three examples of the sheep, they cannot be used as hard evidence to indicate a systematic style of the Yuan period, largely because they are not from the imperial collections. In other art forms, however, they do demonstrate the Mongols’ adoration of large-horned animals. The pendants of the deer and the monkey were excavated from tombs. As such, they have a specific source and could thus be used as partial evidence that commoners were not allowed to use jade

²² One of the most distinctive components of Hinduism is its tribal religion (Southeimer, Günther D. 1989, p. 203). This notion of the tribal accords well with the image of their habitat amongst the people of the plains. It is both fearsome and at the same time the source of renewal. It is not only the religion of the forest tribes, but also the great, often nomadising pastoral groups who live. Hinduism, along with the Indian Buddhism, did have something attractive to offer to the Mongols.

during Yuan times. The jade pig has significant religious associations, some of them deeply rooted in Indian Buddhism.

8.1.2 Reptiles (Reptilia) (5)

- *Tortoises (5)*

The tortoise is defined in *Er Ya* as a divine or supernatural animal which bears the markings of the constellations of Heaven and of Earth,²³ and as a sacred animal of longevity (*Er Ya*, Zhou Dynasty, Fish Section, p. 11). Among the Four Spiritual Animals of China, along with the phoenix, dragon and unicorn, the tortoise is the heraldic equivalent of the Black Snake of the North (Eberhard, 1968, p. 313). It is sometimes called the Black Warrior (Sun, 1974, p. 201). As mentioned in Chapter 6, the tortoise was a symbol of longevity, strength and endurance. It was believed to be able to live for ten thousand years. Therefore, wherever the image of tortoise appears, it symbolises longevity. For example, temples sometimes keep pools of tortoises together with ponds of goldfish, the former to symbolise longevity, the latter wealth (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 98). The image of the tortoise appears three times among the jades chosen for this thesis (Fig. 7-19, Fig. 7-27 and Fig. 7-63). It was common to juxtapose the tortoise with creatures like deer, cranes or storks, which were also auspicious symbols of longevity in Chinese art (Brinker, 1989, pl. 76). Stone sculptures of the tortoise are often found guarding imperial tombs and supporting memorial stele, where they convey the idea of permanence (Luo Zhewen, 1993, pp. 88-123).

²³ Although the tortoise was used as a food animal, it also had a sacred divinatory purpose. The plastron of the tortoise was cleaned, then fire was applied to it until its surface cracked, and from these cracks the priest or shaman would read the future (Munsterberg, 1986, p. 161).

8.1.3 Birds (Aves) (79)

- *Hunting-birds (17)*

The northern nomadic hunting-scene was often depicted in the art of the Hunnish tribes since the earliest times. These people are believed to be the ancient nomads from whom the Mongols arose (Grousset, 1970, p. 43). The scene woven and embroidered on a felt carpet in No. 87, is of a large moose being attacked and forced down by another animal of some sort. This would have been a matter-of-fact subject for the hunting tribes of about 3,000 years ago, and the carpet's picture shows aspects that would have been part of their ordinary life. The Mongols, as likewise a hunting-people, carried on a similar hunting life-style, and had a similar taste in art. They, however, employed the motif of the falcon, a bird of prey, as the major predator, with the swan or goose as the prey.

Altogether, only two or three different kinds of birds are known to have been depicted in Yuan hunting scenes, these including the bird of prey and the swan (or goose). The spring-hunting motif (Chapter Five) has the falcon attacking the swan(s) (or geese), and this was a symbol fashionable among such nomadic peoples as the Khitans (of the Liao Dynasty), the Jurchens (of the Jin Dynasty) and the Mongols (of the Yuan Dynasty). Their depiction of the spring hunt show much about the life-style of these peoples in those times.

Historical records show that several different kinds of birds of prey were used in hunting by the Yuan emperors (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 2599). According to both artistic and literary works of the time, the falcon (*Falco ssp.*) was the favoured hunting bird during the Yuan period. There were, however, ten species of falcon of the family Falconidae in China, among which eight either lived in, or migrated to, the North and Northeast of China: Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*), Gerfalcon (*Falco gyrfalco*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), Merlin

(*Falco columbarius*), Red-legged Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*) and Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, pp. 108-116). All these falcons look very similar in shape, with pointed and usually narrow wings, and without very big variations in size, ranging from 12" to 18" long (No. 29). They all feed on small mammals and other birds (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, pp. 108-109). In addition, they are all hunters on the wing, able to take their prey in the air (King, et al, 1975, pp. 94-99).

In a zoological sense, the *hai dong qing* 海东青 which is recorded as the best and most favoured hunting bird in the Yuan court, has been identified as of the species Peregrine Falcon (Du Yaquan, et al, 1932, p. 2477). It was, however, the Peregrine Falcon from "the East Sea" which is noted in *History of the Yuan* as the best (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1400). It is further specified in some Japanese literature that the best "*hai dong qing*" had lighter-coloured claws, and came from Korea (Tsugio Mikami, 1972, p. 23). This "lighter-coloured" falcon is also several times recorded, with clear definition, in the *History of the Yuan*. For example, when the Emperor Chengzong was being crowned, somebody "paid him as tribute a Peregrine Falcon and a white Peregrine Falcon" (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 3262). In the 4th year of Chengzong's reign, i.e. 1298, he is recorded as having granted a "white Peregrine Falcon" to the Vice General Commander of Military Affairs of Fujian Province (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 3806). The Yuan emperors from time to time granted "Peregrine Falcons and white Peregrine Falcons to various outstanding officials (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 3071 & 3132). These records have certainly raised the strong possibility of the existence of a different Peregrine Falcon, other than the Peregrine Falcon in general terms. Indeed, this bird is reported to have four sub-species, one of which is from Japan and its coastal seas. This one is called *Falco peregrinus japonensis* and was identified in 1789 (Linné, 1788, p. 257). It is said to have bred from north Heilongjiang (Northern China) to East China, and to have wintered in the Southeast of mainland China and on Taiwan (de Schauensee, 1984, p. 174). This recent piece of wildlife information interestingly tallies with the piece of historical information provided by Yu Minzhong, that any criminal sentenced during

the Yuan period to exile in the Eastern Countries (Dong Guo 东国 present-day Korea or further east including Japan) would have his crime pardoned and be released if he caught a *hai dong qing* there, and sent it to the Yuan court (Yu Minzhong, 1774, p. 2414).

This sub-species of the Peregrine Falcon has been reported to be locally extinct in the lower reaches of the River Amur, however, and is rarely seen anywhere in Northern China, after many hundreds of years of its capture there for hunting purposes, starting with the Liao and continuing to the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 137). To be able to identify the exact species or sub-species of the *hai dong qing* depicted in spring-hunt jades requires contributions from both science and art.

Although the bird of prey rendered in jades of the time is sometimes described in English writings as the hawk (Forsyth, et al, 1994, p. 325), it is more likely that it is the falcon rather than other kinds of bird of prey, such as the Sparrow-hawk (*Accipiter nisus*), the Besra Sparrow-hawk (*Accipiter virgatus*), the Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) or the eagle (*Circaetus ssp.*). These latter birds could well have been trained to hunt, without necessarily being rendered in jades. That it was the Peregrine Falcon who was favoured for depiction can be seen clearly by examining the shape of the wings of the birds of prey on the jades. In all cases, the tips of their wings are pointed, which is one of the distinctive features that neither hawks (No. 34) nor eagles (No. 33) have, but which the Peregrine Falcon does.

The motif of the falcon attacking another bird can also be found in some European art from the 4th century (Dittrich, 1963, p. 170). An example shown in this thesis is that of a young swan (or goose) depicted as of a much smaller size compared to its predator, a falcon (No. 30). The falcon in the jades of the Yuan Dynasty is, by way of contrast, always depicted as much smaller than the swan. This is also true in real life, but it is believed by some scholars that this motif bears some political implication latent within it (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 138). It was, they say, meant to give a sense of the victory of a smaller nation having conquered a larger one, to convey the fact

that the Mongols, a small group of northern nomadic peoples, had conquered the Chinese, a much larger nation. Watson was of this opinion, and felt that the falcon versus swan combat symbolised the incursions of the nomads into the territory of their civilised neighbours, and their contempt for the sedentary occupations of the Chinese city-dwellers (Watson, 1974, p. 60). Feng Mingzhu has argued, however, that it would have been a great pleasure for the falcon trainer to see his well-trained falcon attacking a big but vulnerable swan, rather than to extrapolate from this combat some political reasoning of who had conquered whom (Feng Mingzhu, 1984, p. 87). Keegan has summarised Chinghiz Khan by Chinghiz's own words: "Man's greatest good fortune is to chase and defeat his enemy, seize his total possessions, ..." (Keegan, 1993, p. 188). There is still, however, no direct evidence from the historical archives which convincingly indicates that the falcon attacking the swan was meant to imply anything more than a straightforward description and record of hunting activities and their pleasure. The idea of pleasure being derived from the killing of a beautiful swan by a falcon indicates that the motif originated among the hunting tribes in the North, and would not generally have been seen as a pleasant subject for depiction in art by the Chinese, especially those of Southern China (Zhang Guangwen, 1994, p. 70).

In old Chinese literature, the falcon was described as having great majesty power and courage (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 286). When it soared into the sky, all flying creatures seemed to freeze. In art, it was the symbol of boldness and strength (Williams, 1931, p. 141). In other civilisations, such as that of the Egyptians, the falcon is something of an enigma, in ways which suggest it could have had some link with the phoenix (Whittick, 1960, p. 265). Some believe that the Sphinx, with its falcon's head, was a version of the phoenix. It has also been discovered that the phoenix woven into the fabrics of Yuan times sometimes has cranial characteristics strikingly shared in common with those on the head of the falcon. The phoenix has a round and full head, with white-coloured feathers starting from its cheeks. Its beak is bent-over, emphasising its hook-like sharpness. These features can also be found in the falcon (No. 29). Although the phoenix is arguably a form of pheasant or peacock

from the Phasianidae family (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 211), this mythical bird does indeed share some of the physical characteristics of the falcon.

The image of the falcon was employed in the imperial mailing-system of the Yuan Dynasty. The imperial mail-halts from Dadu to Jinan (the present-day provincial capital of Shandong Province), were named Sea Darks (*hai qing*, 海青), the middle word, *dong* (East), being omitted, and the bird used as a symbol of authority, (Song Lian, 1370, p. 74). The image of the *hai qing* was also rendered on the silver or gold-plated plaques or amulets carried by the messengers of the mail-halts, probably to remind them that the mail had to travel as fast as the falcon. The messengers were, according to the degree of urgency of the emperors' orders, given either a silver-plated or a gold-plated Sea Dark plaque as their "pass" to indicate their superior status. It was forbidden for them to be stopped or questioned by anyone when they were delivering the emperors' messages.

It is reported that there was a dance in the Yuan court called Sea Dark Catching Swans (*Hai-qing na tian er*) which was frequently performed (Xu Lin, 1999, p. 85). However, this would need historical evidence. The motif of the falcon attacking the swan was no doubt highly regarded, and was a subject which pervaded various aspects of life and art in the Yuan court.

- *Swans and Geese (28)*

The birds being attacked by the falcons which were depicted in jade during Yuan times could have been the snow-goose, the Chinese or swan-goose, or swans (Yu Minzhong, 1774, p. 2415; Yang Boda, 1993, Preface; Feng Mingzhu, 1984, p. 88; Zhang Guangwen, 1992, p. 111). All of these birds are relatively closely related to one another under the order Anseriformes. They are all large, beautiful birds with very long necks, elegant bodies and enormous wings (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, p. 39-45). They have a similar diet of fresh water plants, small shrimp etc., and are migratory, breeding in the north and flying to the south for the winter (Zhou Zhen, 1992, pp. 57-67). The picture of a group of swans (No. 28) demonstrates some of the major and

common physical characteristics of these large birds. Small anatomical details, such as the colours and shading of their feathers and beaks, the shape and size of their eyes, and the exact measurements of their bodies are of course characteristic, but not different enough to be obvious once the bird is depicted in jade. This suggests that any one, or all of them, could have been preyed upon during the spring hunt. The most elegant long neck of the swan, however, is one of the most striking features depicted in jade, and it seems to have been this bird that won the accolade of being the most frequently depicted in the spring-hunt jades.

In the *History of the Yuan*, there are several places where it is recorded that it was “forbidden” for any commoners to catch or kill the swan, especially in the South of China, where the swan migrated in the autumn and winter (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 401). This law was very strictly applied, and any violation would result in a very high price to pay, including the execution of the perpetrator’s whole family (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 620). This enforcement of a kind of conservation plan was either to maintain a reasonable stock of the swan, or, more specifically, to ensure the quality of entertainment of the emperors in the spring hunt.

Another source records that throughout the 14th century there were cold weather and constant precipitation in China (Hinsch, 1988, p. 154). Millions of people perished in the cold. Coincidentally, it was also several times recorded in the *History of the Yuan* that extremely cold winters throughout China killed many people in 1333, 1346 and 1367 (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 1096 & 1098). These climatic variations provide evidence that population of swans may also have been reduced by the severe cold. The imperial order to protect the swan in Southern China was made to ensure an adequate population of the bird, not only for the imperial hunt but probably also for the numerous imperial sacrificial services to Earth and Heaven, which used the swan in sacrifice (Song Lian, et al, p. 1386; p. 1845).

Culturally, the swan is considered to have had little significance in China, apart from the influence of its beauty and elegance, both in real life and in art (Ong Hean-Tatt.

1993, p. 286). It is, however, recognised as having been a symbol of both male and female virginity, and reflects purity and grace (Whittick, 1960, p. 269). This symbolism was during the Ming Dynasty largely transferred to the Mandarin-duck, a process completed in the Qing period (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 105).

There are four birds in jades considered in this thesis which were excavated from a tomb dated to the Yuan Dynasty (Yang Boda, 1993, p. 128). When their physical appearance is compared with that of the swan (No. 28), it is clear that they do not seem to have long enough necks and bodies to be swans. The possibility that they were modelled on the swan cannot, however, be excluded. They are not juxtaposed with the other components of the typical motif of the spring hunting scene, the falcon or water plants. They are vividly depicted in full relief, either in a standing position, or about to fly with wings wide open. This use of full relief indicates that they were not some kind of toy to be held in the hand for fondling or kept in a pocket. There is no hole in any of these geese, which suggests that they were not pendants either. The option remains that they could have been ornaments to decorate the houses of city-dwellers who did not live on horseback.

- ***Other Birds (34)***

- **Peacocks and pheasants (3)**

There is one clearly depicted peacock in jade considered in this thesis (Fig. 6-14). The bird is naturalistically depicted, with an elegant crown and beautiful tail. Only one species of peacock has been recorded in China, and it is seen almost only in the South of China, in Yunnan Province and on Hainan Island (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, p. 159). The bird was paid as tribute to the imperial court (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 269). The swan as an image is also recorded in various ways in the *History of the Yuan*. For example, a Mongolian musical instrument of the Yuan court called the *long sheng* 龙笙 was a peacock-headed instrument with a wooden neck and feather-decorated body (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1771). There was also a colourful dance at

court called the “Dance of the Peacock”, which was performed at certain ceremonies (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1771). In ancient Chinese literature, the peacock is highly praised of its ability to learn and understand (Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 584). It is because that the peacock has its name (孔雀 *kong que*) connected, in pronunciation, with the Chinese word of *kong* 孔, which can mean “passing through” applying “understanding”. Therefore, apart from the peacock’s beautiful and elegant (especially that of its male) appearance, the bird is regarded a symbol of beauty, morality and a harmonious relationship with others (Chapter Seven).

Although only one example of the peacock in jade has been identified, the historical evidence of the widespread use of its image in the court make it not unlikely that more Yuan images of the peacock in jade will be discovered in the future.

Like the peacock, the pheasant is also commonly found depicted in art. A good example of this bird can be seen in No. 89. The illustration is of a piece of precious inherited textiles obtained from a grandson of the Ming Emperor Taizu, now found in the collection of Liaoning Provincial Museum. There are at least two obviously pheasant-type birds depicted on it. The pheasant in China is a common sight in the countryside. The peacock and the pheasant are sometimes difficult to tell apart when their images are depicted in art, especially in jades when the carving is not fine enough to indicate the characteristics of the different species. In fact, the peacock and some species of Chinese pheasant, such as Hume’s Pheasant (*Syrnaticus humiae*), can look quite similar. Both have a long, beautifully feathered tail (King, et al, 1986, pl. 8). Taxonomically, the peacock and pheasant are closely related, and belong to the same family, Phasianidae.

Possibly due to their similarities, these two birds are sometimes regarded as interchangeable in art, with similar auspicious meanings ascribed to them (Ong Hcan-Tatt. 1993, p. 211). When the peacock (or the pheasant) is shown standing on a rock, it is a symbol of imperial authority, or can also symbolise the sun and warmth. These “qualities” are also ascribed to the phoenix, a mythical bird (Brinker, et al,

1989, no. 76). Certainly from the depiction of these three birds in Chinese art, there is strong reason to believe that the phoenix could well be a stylised and modified auspicious form of the pheasant or the peacock (Fig. 6-12 & No. 90).

During the Ming Dynasty, the peacock was less and less frequently employed in the depiction of the “five virtues” (Chapter Six). Zhou Nanquan argues that this was because the phoenix, rather than the peacock or the pheasant, was then more often used to symbolise the empress, in a metaphor of harmonious and prosperous times (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 99). This hypothesis may become verified as more archaeological and historical evidence emerges. How the images of the peacock and the pheasant were artistically modified and stylised to form the image of the auspicious mythical bird known as the phoenix also requires further research to improve our understanding of it.

- **Eagles (4)**

The eagle appears twice in this thesis, among the Jade of Autumn Mountain (Fig. 5-34 & Fig. 5-35). The function of this bird, however, is not to attack but to convey some form of philosophical meaning, thus not serving aesthetic purposes. In Fig. 5-34, the eagle is rendered with a bear, to create a pairing, a compound word that homophonically corresponds with the words for the pair meaning “hero” (Chapter Five). For this particular purpose, the specific species of the eagle did not matter, only its image. In Fig. 5-35, the eagle is standing on the branch of a tree, with its head turned to its right. The feathers on its tail are depicted with intaglio lines arranged in a radiating manner. According to Zhou Nanquan, this way of depicting an eagle was not seen before the Yuan period (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 149).

When depicted in Neolithic times, the eagle was described as an image signifying something between divinity and humanity (Yang Meili, 1998, p. 66). Its mythical function was to act as a spokesman for humans, conveying messages to gods and spirits (Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 142). However, with the passage of time, the

functions of the eagle in artistic depiction seems to have gradually evolved from its early supernatural ones to those of being no more than a decorative image. Sometimes the image of the eagle did, however, when depicted together with something else, bear some moral significance, as illustrated in Fig. 5-34. This is the jade of the eagle and bear, which, as discussed previously, (see subtitle “Bear” above) were used in art to convey the concept of “hero” or “heroism”. It is depicted in a very realistic fashion, almost identical to the photographs of eagle found in Baschet’s book (Baschet, 1989, p. 63). Attention was therefore not focused on either the bird’s aesthetic form or its anatomical accuracy. The second jade eagle in this thesis (Fig. 5-35), however, is depicted with beauty and in a naturalistic manner. It has a very sharp bill and a piercing stare in its eye. Its wings and tail are depicted with parallel incisions to represent the feathers. The artist has given a very faithful account of its anatomy. For example, the wings rest along the side of the body, and partially overlap distally. The tail is longer than the wings and is hardly covered by them at all. Other species of eagles in Northern China do not have these distinctive features shown in the jade eagle (Fig. 5-35).

The two birds in jade illustrated in Fig. 7-47 have already been discussed in depth in Chapter Seven, where they were given preliminary identification as Changeable Hawk-eagles (No. 77). These examples of the realistic depiction of eagles during the Yuan period demonstrate once again an interest at the time in the accurate depiction of wildlife by artists for their Mongol clientele.

- **Cranes, egrets, and storks or herons (17)**

Ten of the jade objects which have been considered in this thesis show 17 individual birds, which have been variously identified as cranes (*Gruidae ssp.*), egrets (*Ardeidae ssp.*), storks (*Ciconiidae ssp.*), or herons (*Ardeidae ssp.*). These four different kinds of birds are widespread and well-known throughout China. The crane is classified in the order Gruiformes, and the other three birds, the egret, stork and heron all in the order Ciconiiformes (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, p. 160 & 18). The four genera share,

however, a number of their most common physical features: long bills, fairly long, thin necks and chopstick-like legs (King, et al, 1975, p. 33). It is therefore, difficult to be accurate in the identification of which of them the birds in jade are, there being no additional specific features to rely upon. Only the stork stands out in this regard, in that some species can have a rather shorter neck (No. 91). In 1976, a shirt was excavated in Inner Mongolia which provided some clues to the possible identification of these skinny-legged birds (No. 91). Two birds were woven into the fabric in a fairly realistic style. Each one of them has a distinctive crown, which definitely points in the direction of the Chinese Egret (*Egretta eulophotes*), the Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) or the Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*); each of these has a crown of a few feathers and lives in south China (del Hoyo, et al, 1992, p. 412). They are migrant birds and widely spread in China ranging from 50° north latitude around the area of River Amur, to Hainan Island, 22° south latitude (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, pp. 23-26). No other skinny-legged birds from China have anything like a crown on their head.

In *Er Ya*, the egret is said to represent purity, since the bird stands in the water without any mud sullyng its body (*Er Ya*, Zhou Dynasty, Bird Section, p. 14). In Chinese art, the crane is an auspicious bird that is a powerful symbol of Heaven's blessing. The egret, crane, stork and heron are often depicted interchangeably to represent similar ideas, even though they are of course different species. They were employed as the patriarch of the feathered creatures, and as the special carrier of the immortals, especially of the God of Longevity and the Queen of Heaven (Burkhardt, 1982, p. 291). Often one or two cranes are depicted with a pine tree, together symbolising longevity, as in Fig. 7-18 and Fig. 7-19. In real life, the crane, sometimes, and more particularly the heron, do roost in trees (Prytherch, 1999, p. 32). In the motif of the long-necked and thin-legged bird in the pine tree, the bird could well be the heron.

These long-and-thin-legged birds are also very often depicted along with other auspicious creatures, such as the peacock, tortoise and deer, as seen in Fig. 7-62 and

Fig. 7-63. These creatures, as discussed above, are symbols of longevity, authority, the sun and warmth (Ong Hean-Tatt. 1993, p. 211). In art, placing these auspicious creatures together enhances their power and beauty.

- Unidentified birds (9)

One of the “unidentified” birds in this thesis is shown in Fig. 5-33. The bird in this jade does not seem to convey any specific auspicious meaning, or be part of any conventional motif such, for instance, as the combination of a tiger-headed and a phoenix-tailed creature. It just seems to be part of the decoration and background, but conjectures can be made from its form suggesting various possible identifications.

The bird (Fig. 5-33) has a small bill and a long tail, which may be seen as resembling those of the magpie (*Pica pica*). The magpie is widespread in China, being found from Heilongjiang Province, in the north of China, to Hainan Island, in the south (Zheng Zuoxin, 1976, p. 502). It is a bird which is frequently depicted in art and literature, as it is considered to be a good omen of glad tidings, happiness and marital fidelity (Eberhard, 1968, p. 147). The magpie has also been one of the most popular birds found in textile-designs. For example, the one illustrated in No. 89 is a beautiful magpie on a Magnolia Tree (*Magnolia yulan*), and symbolises the month of May (Nott, 1962, p. 133). The bird illustrated in Fig. 5-33 obviously shares some of the characteristics of the bird in the textile. Their beaks, tails and wings look much alike. They both have their head turned sideways or backward, and their tail cocked high in the air, with a slight turn to it.

Alternatively, the jade bird could be a lark (*Alauda gulgula*), a bird which is also widespread in China (King, et al, 1986, p. 248). The lark is well known for its singing high in the air. Conjecture as to the identity of such birds as that in Fig. 5-33 could involve endless speculation. However, there is no conventional clue to identify or explain the function of the two birds on a tree branch shown in Fig. 5-35 as anything other than their having had a purely decorative purpose. An eagle is

portrayed standing beneath them. This appears to be just a peaceful scene of birds in trees. The Autumn Mountain motif is depicted on the other side of this jade.

The second type of “unidentified” birds are those which have been given some kind of “double” identity, such as those illustrated in Fig. 7-47. These two jade “eagles” had been re-identified as two parrots when they were re-exhibited eight years after their first appearance in an exhibition (Chapter Seven).

The third type of “unidentified” birds are those with exchangeable classifications. A typical example of this kind is illustrated in Fig. 7-62. It has been said that there are five birds depicted in this jade knob: the peacock, egret, Paradise-flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*), lark, and Mandarin-duck (Zhou Nanquan, 1995, p. 179).²⁴ A discussion of this motif, of a group of birds or, more normally, of a group of five different kinds of bird, has been made earlier above, during the examination of jade objects depicting the Five Human Moral Relationships (Chapter Six).

This combination of five birds does not seem to be the same in every case, even though the various combinations all appear to have the same function. The Chinese version of this motif features the phoenix (or peacock), pheasant, egret (or crane), Mandarin-duck and warbler (*Tesia ssp.*) (Zhou Nanquan, 1987, p. 16). As seen above, the peacock or phoenix is thought of as the queen of birds; the pheasant has beautiful feathers; the egret or crane is mild tempered and a symbol of purity and longevity; the Mandarin-duck represents a stable marriage and the warbler sings nicely. In some of the jades considered in this thesis the combinations of birds seem to have varied quite freely. For example, in Fig. 7-60, a pair of cranes is found, in Fig. 7-61, seemingly more than one stork, and in Fig. 6-14 there appear to be a peacock, a crane, a pheasant, an egret and even a falcon. In Fig. 7-66, four egrets are

²⁴ The published picture is not clear, and does not shown every side of the object. As a consequence, it is not possible to see all the details. According to the original text accompanying this picture, the five birds are the phoenix, egret, crane, lark and Mandarin-duck. I also contacted the Palace Museum, Beijing, asking to see this jade, but my application was turned down. I therefore have provisionally to assume that what the text says is correct.

rendered in an atmosphere of peace, but with a falcon attacking a swan! The Chinese concept of harmony and respectful relationships has here been disrupted by the insertion of a bird of prey. This strongly suggests the influence of northern nomadic or Mongol craftsmanship or taste.

Finally, some of the jade birds, remain “unidentified”, because they are so briefly or boldly depicted. Therefore, the names previously ascribed to these birds may be acceptable only because the ascription derive from original records or early publications concerning these jades. Traditional or conventional concepts in such cases play a more important role in their identification than detailed analysis of their anatomical depiction.

8.1.4 Sea Animals (13)

There are two kinds of sea creatures depicted in jades: vertebrate fish (*Pisces ssp.*) and the invertebrate conch (*Molluscs ssp.*). Although the depiction of fish in China can be traced back to decorations painted on Neolithic pots, hunting scenes on bronze vessels of the late Zhou Dynasty, and funerary stones or tiles of the Han Dynasty, it did not develop into a fully established genre in China until the 10th century (Song Houmei, 1995, p. 1). As a consequence of its important function as food, the fish was originally an inseparable part of human life. The fish-image depicted on Neolithic pots is hard evidence of the early importance of fish. Ancient humans also admired and worshipped the fish for its ability to reproduce so prolifically for much of its life. It became a symbol of fertility, not only for Chinese people, but for other peoples all over the planet (Brinker, et al, 1989, pl.73). Jade fish are found in Chinese tombs from the earliest times, as emblems of wealth or abundance, a usage further entrenched by the coincidence of the similarity in pronunciation between the Chinese words for “fish” and “super-abundance”, “more than enough” (Nott, 1962, p. 101). The word for “fish” is pronounced *yú* 鱼 (a rising pitch-tone). This pronunciation is the same as for the word for “super-abundance”, also *yú* 余 (likewise in rising pitch-tone). There are many legends and a great deal of folklore woven around the fish,

owing to its attractive appearance, and to this auspicious homophonic correspondence with the word for wealth and abundance, conditions welcome to almost any person or family, as discussed in Chapter Seven. The fish thus embodied the wish to avoid poverty and the hope for more children, another aspect of abundance (Brinker, 1989, p. 73).

Fish in jade made during the Yuan period were often depicted as plump (Fig. 7-38, 39, 40 & 41). Even in depiction of it at rest, some kind of movement can be felt. This is believed to constitute a difference from the typical Jin Dynasty fish, which is “a fish sleeping amid lotuses” (Fig. 7-45), and from Ming motif of “fish jumping out of water” (Yin Zhiqiang, 1999, P. 75).

Two kinds of fish depicted in jades are considered in this thesis, the carp and the Mandarin-fish. It is not by any mere accident that these particular fish are the subjects of jade-carving, since they feature strongly in the evolution of Chinese ideological symbolism and associated aesthetic values.

- *Carp (3)*

It was in the Tang Dynasty that the carp first won great favour in China. This came about because of the homophonic coincidence which the name of the fish happened to have with the pronunciation of the surname of the Tang emperors.²⁵ Another reason was because it was believed that the carp never shut its eyes,²⁶ which was taken as a good sign for an enduring Tang Dynasty for its alertness or undying endurance (Chen Xiasheng, 1984, p. 6). Concurrent with the carp's ability to convey these analogical and metaphorical messages with political implications, the fish was also imbued with the qualities of a supernatural fish that could be transformed into a dragon, as discussed earlier in this chapter (Song Houmei, 1995, p. 10). During the

²⁵ The relationship between the pronunciation of the Chinese word for “carp” and that of the surname of the Tang emperors has already been discussed, in Chapter Seven above.

²⁶ Most fish do not have proper eyelids. Some have skin wrinkles around their eyes. Even at maximum stretch, this wrinkled skin can only cover a small fraction of the eye (Norman, 1958, p. 164).

Song Dynasty, there was a strong cultural trend for expressing and admiring a sense of beauty and the charms of the scholarly life. The association of the word for carp with sound of the Tang emperor's surname was largely forgotten. By then, the carp was depicted and worshipped as a symbolic image of the highly accomplished government official. Under Mongol rule in the Yuan Dynasty, the dramatic political and social changes had their own impact on the depiction of the carp, which image was used to help Chinese scholars and artisans in subtle ways express their ideas. The carp retained its supernatural status, and was often depicted leaping into the air, with its body forming an arch and its tail twisted. These features can be found in many large ceramic basins uncarthed from the site of Dadu, such as the ones shown in Nos. 92 & 93. Although the leaping carp still symbolised a highly accomplished scholar, as it had during the Southern Song Dynasty, the collapse of the Song Dynasty, and its replacement by the barbarian Mongol rulers, added another layer of symbolic meaning to the carp (Song Houmei, 1995, p. 16). The carp in Yuan art was intended to refer to the cultured Chinese, in contrast to the Mongols who dominated the government. The message was conveyed in subtle detail. A carp painting of the Yuan period entitled "One Hundred Fish Worshipping the Carp" has a poem inscribed on it, which says:

The Rivers Yangtze and the Han both respectfully submit to the ocean; And all the giant fish roam around here. The numerous loach all pay homage to their seniors, I know this is an inevitable outcome (Song Houmei, 1995, p. 16).²⁷

On deeper examination, one can hardly miss the implied message of the poem, that the superior Chinese will inevitably recover the throne from the Mongols. An especially illuminating part of the message is the use of the term loach (*qiu* 鳊 mud-loach), which is generally regarded as an inferior species of fish. This word is also a homophone for *qiu* 酋, meaning "the chief of the tribe", which alludes to the Mongols. The metaphor of the Rivers Yangtze and Han paying homage to the ocean also hints at the Mongol people's past tributary relationship to China. There is

²⁷ However, this painting is said to have been missing for a long time (Zhang Guangwen, 1998, Interview). Throughout my research in the past 4 years, I haven't found this painting either.

another aspect, seen elsewhere. The Chinese literary commonplace concerning the carp's aspiration to jump over the dragon-gate is another way of inferring a wish to get rid of Mongol control, and is expressed, by depicting the carp moving vigorously and energetically wagging its tail. This is a typical example of the subtle and scholarly nature of Chinese analogies and metaphors. The jade carp illustrated in (Fig. 7-36 and Fig. 7-37) and shown in Chapter Seven amply demonstrates this dynamic and symbolic emphasis. The carp on the ceramic dish in the Ashmolean Museum collection in Oxford is another example of carp with their tails flapping vigorously in the water.

It would be of interest to learn what the Mongols felt about this type of depiction and whether they ever sensed the subtly expressed message conveyed by Chinese scholars through the form of the carp. Fish, however, were used in the Yuan court as sacrificial creatures (Song Lian, et al, 1370, pp. 1820 & 1869). They do not seem to have had much political implication other than as mentioned above.

The carp is one of the most widespread fish in China (Wu Xianwen, 1979, p. 108), where it has lived for at least 2-3 million years (Sun Bo, 1995, p. 42). In 1956, 60% of China's commercial carp-output came from the River Wuliangsu in Inner Mongolia (Sun Bo, 1995, p. 42). The carp is therefore as much a fish of the Mongols as it is of the Chinese. Jade fish, carved as jewellery, and unearthed from the tomb of the Princess of Chenguo State, were made during the Liao Dynasty (Yang Boda, 1993a, p. 266). The fish was one of the creatures that the northern nomads depicted with a "Mongol style" on jades. Generally speaking, its depiction was vigorous and unrestrained, characteristics that are silently in evidence throughout the jades considered in this thesis.

In the light of these observations, it remains premature to conclude for certain that the vigorous depiction of carp in jade was a purely Chinese concept, and a subtle put-down of the Mongols. It may have been quite unpolitical, no more than the normal

Mongol style of depicting dynamic carp, using the same sense of lively movement as they used for every other animal that they portrayed in jade.

- ***Mandarin-fish (8)***

Another popular fish depicted in jade has been classified as the Mandarin-fish, known in Chinese as *guiyu* 鳊鱼, one of the oldest native fish of China (Sun Bo, 1995, p. 42). There are 6 species of Mandarin-fish in the River Yangtze and its tributaries. They all share striking physical resemblance with one another (Hubei Provincial Institute of Aquatic Biology, 1976, pp. 192-198). With this fish too, the pronunciation of its name, *guiyu*, is seen as conveying the notion of becoming rich and prosperous. *Gui* is a homophone for the word *gui* 贵 meaning “eminent”, “honoured”, while *yu*, is a homophone for *yu* 余, meaning “surplus”, “extra”, “abundance”, “super-abundance”. Although the Mandarin-fish has the unpleasant feeding-habit of catching small fish in a sudden and vicious manner, and then spilling from its jaws the half-chewed and half-dead victim, the pronunciation of its name thus punningly signifies seniority of rank and great wealth, both acquisitions much sought-after by Chinese people throughout history.

- ***Conch Shells (2)***

There are two conch shells (海螺) carved on the Great Jade Urn. The conch was not one of the most common motifs to be found in the art of Yuan times, perhaps because the Mongols were a land-based, not a sea-faring, people. The conch had its own peculiar significance, however, as one of the Buddhist treasures.²⁸ The Sanskrit for “conch” is Sankha. It was used as a general term for “riches”, “valuables” in Buddhism, and also signified a large trumpet sounded to summon Buddhist assemblies together. The Chinese character for “conch” was used in a number of

²⁸ A famous pair of ceramic vases (No. 17) - the David Vases dated to 1351, in the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art in London, depict a couple of conches.

Chinese transliterations of Sanskrit Buddhist terms concerning scriptures and writing materials.

8.1.5 Zoomorphic Animals (87)

Despite their sensitive skills of naturalistic observation and depiction, artists of the Yuan could be relied upon to give an extra wide sweep to the horns of an ibex, or to reduce a frog to the still legible shorthand of simplicity. But beyond the beauty of their depiction of animals, a beauty openly available for all to see, there lies a religious and cultural significance, which can sometimes only be extracted by the slow and painstaking work of many scholars. Zoomorphic animals fall into this category. “Zoomorphic” is defined in the Macquaried Dictionary as “ascribing animal force or attributes to beings or things not animals, representing a deity in the form of an animal”. Zoomorphs are figures which are primarily animals but have supernatural features. They are commented upon as the symbolism of the beast, with a reality associated with admiration, fear and hatred (Carter, 1957, p. 20).

There are 87 zoomorphic jade creatures considered in this thesis. Most of them are what are called conventional mythical animals, such as the dragon, phoenix and certain other imagined creatures with recognisably naturalistic features. Apart from the traditional concepts of the dragon and phoenix, which had deep roots in Chinese history, the other mythical creatures also had their own significance, both in their associated meanings and in the manner of their depiction during the Yuan Dynasty. The following discussion explores these points.

- ***Dragons (64)***

The Chinese dragon has outnumbered any other jade creature depicted in this thesis. This is as might have been expected, since the dragon is the most widely known animal in Chinese culture (Hodous, 1929, p. 139). No other animal has occupied such an important and stable place in the thought and art of the Chinese people for at least five thousand years. The dragon is highly praised as the symbol of the Chinese

nation and spirit (He Xingliang, 1992, p. 353). Dragon-worship was not, however, restricted to the Chinese, but was also a pervasive idolatry of the Mongols since the remote past. For example, the famous jade dragon which was excavated in Inner Mongolia in 1971, has been dated to the Hongshan Culture Period of Neolithic times in Northern China, about 4500-6000 years ago (Wengnu teqi Cultural Museum, 1984, p. 21). Some have argued that the dragon motif was alien to nomadic peoples, and that their beliefs gave special place to real animals rather than to mythical beasts like the dragon (Rawson, 1984, pp. 94-5). The archaeological evidence, and the sheer number and quality of the Yuan jade-dragon objects examined for this thesis, seriously question this view, and indicate that the theory of the dragon's being alien to Mongol culture is not well supported.

The dragon is believed to have been one of the most respected and longest surviving totems in Mongol life (Amurbarto, 1997, p. 367). Its associated characteristics have an essence of strength, goodness and blessing, and it holds the distinction of having been the imperial symbol in ancient times (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 67), and the symbol of sovereign power (Munsterberg, 1986, p. 41). In this thesis, every one of the Imperial Yuan seals considered was rendered with a dragon as its knob. Although the dragon also appears in many jades with other functions, such as scholarly objects and costume decorations, it seems to have been the creature exclusively employed for imperial seals, as a sign of the emperor's absolute power and supremacy.

The dragon totem is thought to have derived from the worship of the snake or serpent in northern China (Amurbarto, 1997, p. 80). Images of the snake can frequently be found in the Yinshan Cave paintings. A theory argues alternatively that the dragon is derived from the Yangtze Alligator, to which it bears a resemblance (Wang Dayou, 1987, p. 79; Wei Juxian, 1934, p. 230). Other theories, that the dragon originated from thunder and cloud (Good, 1990, p. 46), from the rains and rivers (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 66) or even from trees (He Xingliang, 1992, p. 356) have their own attractive colour and aesthetics.

There is one interesting proposal, however, which has attracted particular attention, that the dragon was derived from the pig (He Xingliang, 1992, p. 356). A number of the jade dragons excavated in northern China belong to the Hongshan Cultural Period of Neolithic times in Northern China, about 4500-6000 years ago, and are called jade pig-dragons (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, p. 3). They have a pig's head and a dragon's body, carved in full relief. They curve in the shape of the letter "C", or sometimes of a reversed "C". Sun Shoudao believes that these jade animals provide crucial hints as to the origins of the dragon (Sun Shoudao, 1984, p. 22). He further indicates that the dragon was in fact derived from an image of the pig. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, under the subtitle "Pig", the pig was the totem for the Xiazu (Xia Clan) tribe in Neolithic times (Lu Ji, et al, Warring State, p. 313). He Xingliang points out, furthermore, that the Zhuwei (Pig) Clan of those times was an ally of the Xiazu tribe (He Xingliang, 1992, p. 386). The dragon totem or perhaps the snake totem, which existed at the same time and around the same geographical area, could have come to be integrated with the pig totem of the Zhuwei clan. It would thus have produced the totem image of a "dragonized" pig or a "pig-ized" dragon. The jade pig-dragon may be seen as evidence of such a transformation.

A close inspection of the dragon image during the Yuan period reveals that it was often portrayed with an upper lip longer than its lower one, and sometimes with a pair of large nostrils just like those of a pig. For example, the dragons illustrated in Fig. 7-54 and 7-67 are depicted with this distinctive feature, which calls to mind a pig's mouth: the large, heavy "upper lip" with a kind of snout-shaped nose, and a noticeably shorter and smaller lower lip below. The Yuan dragon is therefore also referred to as the "pig-mouthed dragon" (Zhang Shoushan, 1998, Interview; Yun Xizheng, 1998, Interview).²⁹ This suggests the possibility that the "pig-mouthed

²⁹ Mr. Zhang Shoushan is a retired jade-expert in the Palace Museum, Beijing. He said, when I interviewed him in 1998, that "pig-mouthed dragon" was one of the classifications for defining Yuan dragons. "You won't easily find this term in writings, though", he pointed out, "because it does not sound a very elegant one for describing the dragon. But it is indeed one of the Yuan styles. It is an interesting way of describing the great dragon." (Zhang Shoushan, 1998, Interview). Mr. Yun Xizheng, Director of Tianjin Art Museum, also verbally confirmed the term "pig-mouthed dragon" as describing one of the kinds of dragon depicted during Yuan times, and agreed to the statement that the

dragon” depicted in the art of the Mongols could have been carried down through some form of inspiration from the ancient nomadic “tribes of the pig”. Note also that the pig was worshipped by the Tibetan Buddhists, who were so influential in the Yuan empire (Discussion under the subtitle “Pig” in this chapter). Thus, perhaps, the blending of some of the features of the pig, stemming from ancient Mongol totems, along with those of the divine Buddhist creature, into the well-known supernatural dragon of long historical standing, may have been seen as constituting the best way of strengthening and enhancing the image of power and grace of the Yuan emperors.

As a synthetic creature, the jade dragon of the Mongol’s time seems to have a number of distinguishing characteristic that other dragons before and after the Yuan period do not seem to display, not distinctively. One of these unique characteristics is that quite a number of the jade dragons not only have a “pig mouth”, but also an upwardly curled upper lip. This feature of the dragon is consistently present throughout the dragons considered in this thesis. The animal illustrated in Fig. 4-6, for example, has a large square-shaped mouth, with a longer upper lip which is slightly curled upwards. A similar characteristic can also be found in the dragons shown in Fig. 7-56 and Fig. 7-57. Although slightly differing in appearance in other respects, some dragons have unusually protruding mouths, also with a curled upper lip, and with little inward hook-shaped coil at its tip, typically illustrated in Fig. 3-4, Fig. 6-7, Fig. 6-8 and Fig. 6-11. Dragons like this also appear in stone carvings, such as in No. 15 unearthed from sites of the Yuan Dynasty Dadu, and wall paintings like that presented in No. 102.

If the Mongols mixed some aspects of the anatomy of the pig into the image of the dragon, it would not be far-fetched to assume that the features of other animals may also have been borrowed, to creature the conglomeration of the dragon with all sorts of characteristics from real and imagined animals, as will be discussed shortly. The particular case of the “curled upper lip” can certainly be seen in the real world, apart

“pig-mouthed dragon” is hardly ever found in Chinese writings, but is just a common description of that Yuan dragon in the Chinese jade world. (See: Notes of interview with Yun Xizheng, 1998).

from the “pig mouth”. It is one of the common features of behaviour of some animals called flehmen, which apparently helps bring odors, primarily volatile fatty acids, into the vomeronasal organ and is usually associated with sexual or social behaviors (Beaver, 1994, p. 104). Male animals show the behavior of curled upper lip most often, while testing for the reproductive state of females, especially through the urine. This is most usually associated with stallions (No. 94) which curl their upper lip in the flehmen position when they smell the urine of an estrous mare or are near an estrous mare (Haupt, 1991, p. 26). Animals like buck, ram and cattle also exhibit flehman to inspect estrous status of the female. Since the dragon was indeed regarded to be able to control productivity of human being (He Xingliang, 1992, p. 392), it would be reasonable to explain why the Yuan dragon had the mouth with flehmen exhibit which is one of the first sign of mating activities of some most common animals that the Mongols were mostly associated. There is a solid likelihood that the Mongols employed feature of flehmen to the depiction of the dragon to represent their wish of many children that the dragon would bring.

Among its many other abilities, the dragon was believed, to possess life-giving powers (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 70). That it is why it is depicted with a sign so intimately related to reproduction, one signalling the recognition by the stallion that the mare is in oestrus. Through the artisan’s understanding and his design skills, the signal of the male animal’s perception that the female is on heat was transferred from the real world, modified, stylised and depicted artistically on the face of the Yuan dragon. These two otherwise unrelated animals are, therefore, physically and philosophically interlinked. Who, other than the Mongols, the acme of horse-breeding peoples, with their passion for and minutely detailed knowledge of horses, would have been thus capable of transplanting such an everyday detailed observation, one understood as linked to fertility, onto the dragon they worshipped! The use of such composite way of depicting mythical creatures can be seen in a number of other instances (Discussions of the Lion Dog and *chi* dragon).

The dragon depicted by the Mongols of the Yuan Dynasty was not, however, a total stranger to those from other, Chinese dynasties; it merely had the above-mentioned distinguishing features. The figure of the dragon as a symbol of supernatural powers was, in Yuan times, commonly rendered in a very conventional way, although with great elegance and dynamic force. The depiction of it did not just reflect various anatomical and other aspects of Nature, but also played an active part in forming and giving meaning to certain kinds of social behaviour. The assembling of selected recognisable parts from several creatures in this one man-created creature combined the depiction of a natural form with a statement implying certain meanings by which creatures were selected for inclusion and which were excluded. In ancient Chinese literature, the dragon was said to be recognised by some or all of the following characteristics: horns like the antlers of a deer, head similar to that of a camel, eyes similar to those of a demon, neck elongated like that of a snake, belly like a clam's, body covered with the scales of a fish, claws like those of a hawk, ears like those of a cow, and paws like those of a tiger. An imagined creature, it was almost always, slightly or dramatically, modified or stylised one way or another by the artisan's or artist's individual skills and taste. In another words, it was never a strictly or uniformly defined creature, which is why it is sometimes referred to as "of the dragon family" (Xu Niaxian, et al, 1987, pp. 13-14). Some have tried to group the family members according to their appearances, identifying groups such as those of the *ruan* - a small sized lizard dragon, the *chi* - a hornless dragon, the *ying* - a winged dragon, and the *pan* - a pair of dragons with their bodies entwined together. Even this grouping does not, however, seem to have covered all the possible images of the dragon family, since there are just too many detailed modifications to be found individual dragons. What is more, too many dragons have many cross-group stylisations of their bodies and characteristics to be grouped into any one specific sub-category. All the same, it is not part of the main thrust of this thesis to provide an exhaustive analysis of all the different physical appearances of the dragon. Rather, it is important for our present purposes to single out some of the distinctive features to be found in the dragon of the Yuan period.

Firstly, there is the dragon with the most conventional appearance, a horned or maned head, and a long serpent-like body without much decoration. It seems to have been quite common for dragons of this period to have a simple uncomplicated body. The animal depicted in the early period of the Yuan Dynasty, the dragon illustrated in Fig. 6-9, for example, is typical of this kind. The dragon in this jade has no decoration on its body. Instead, it is rendered almost as a real-life animal, with smooth but strong muscles. The dragons illustrated in Fig. 6-7, Fig. 6-8 and Fig. 7-28 show more of these characteristics. The dragon shown in Fig. 6-7 has three-digit claws, which does not seem to have been common in the dragons of the later Yuan period. Three-clawed dragons are certainly found in ceramics of the period (Nos. 22, 55a & 55b). It was during mid-Yuan times that jade dragons started to have four-digit claws (Fig. 6-8 and Fig. 7-46), a form which is also seen in ceramics of the period, such as the ones shown in No. 23. Towards the later years of the Yuan, the image of the dragon was redefined by the Yuan court as follows:

龙谓五爪二角

The dragon has five-digit claws, and is two-horned (Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1942).

This is believed to have been the first time ever in Chinese imperial records that an instruction was given as to how any part of a dragon should be depicted (Xu Nanting, et al, 1989, p. 139). Zhang Guangwen adds the point that subsequently the five-digit claws were mainly (with the exception of a dragon in standing position) in the shape of the wheel of a wooden cart (Zhang Guangwen, 1998, Interview), as illustrated in Fig. 6-10, Fig. 6-11 and Fig. 7-55. The dragon in No. 56, although portrayed on a piece of textile, also highlights this characteristic form of claw.

Secondly, there was in Yuan times the dragon called the *chi* dragon. It has been described a yellow coloured dragon without horns (Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 670). As a matter of fact, however, although there were many hornless *chi* dragons, many other *chi* dragons, throughout history, did have single or double horns. It is highly likely that this use of horns came about because of artisans' personal tastes, and

because they depicted horns in such a supple, undulant way that the horns might rather be termed a mane, as is seen in Fig. 7-50 and Fig. 7-52.

There are 18 jade *chi* dragons considered in this thesis, among which can be found non-horned, single-horned and maned ones. The *chi* dragons in Fig. 7-29, for example, have long fluttering manes; two *chi* dragons in Fig. 7-26 are non-horned; and the one in Fig. 7-1 has something ambiguous on its head which is defined either as a horn (Zhang Guangwen, 1998, Interview) or as a mane (Yang Jie, 1993, p. 280). This part of the *chi* dragon's "anatomy" is sometimes depicted with a curve at its end which gives it an almost soft, fleshy appearance as shown in Fig. 7-51. It is sometimes depicted with only a few intaglio lines, by means of which a horn or a light mane of some sort is indicated. But sometimes it is just too faintly drawn for one to be able to tell what exactly it is, as in the example seen in Fig. 7-49.

Sometimes, the *chi* dragon clearly does have an elegantly flowing mane, as in the example shown in Fig. 7-29. Often, and more distinctively, the creature has a tail with two (or, seldom, three) gracefully whirled ends. This is almost a characteristic feature for identifying the Yuan *chi* dragon, but it can occasionally be seen in the *chi* dragons of other dynasties as well (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 286). The form of the two-branched tail strikingly resembles the tail of a bird widespread in Mongolia, one called the Black Grouse (*Lyrurus tetrrix*). The male bird has beautiful dark blue and green feathers with a metallic sheen (No. 95). The tail is peculiar in that it has two branches formed from large feathers which curl outwards to form a shape that bears a strong resemblance to that seen in the *chi* dragon's tail. These two creatures, the bird of real life and the animal of myth and legend, do not otherwise seem to have much in common. Their tails do, however, seem so similar to each other's that it is tempting to see the *chi* dragon's as another example of good observation and adaptation by the Mongols. The Black Grouse could indeed have been used as a model for the tail of the *chi* dragon. If this general hypothesis is supported, it would also help explain other characteristics of the Yuan *chi* dragon, such as its ears, which are like those of the tiger (Fig. 6-5) and its mane, which is like that of the horse (Fig. 7-29).

The *chi* dragon was believed to be an offspring of the usual “main-style” dragon (Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 670). For that reason, it is sometimes called “small (main-style) dragon”, and is sometimes depicted with a (main-style) dragon as its parent, as shown in Fig. 7-23 and Fig. 7-24. The *chi* dragon was in fact strikingly different from the main-style dragon in physique. The Yuan *chi* dragon has a very supple and dynamic body with four powerful legs, which are often rendered like the legs and paws of a cat. It has a distinctive tail stylised with one, or often two, whirled ends called bifurcated tail. Most characteristically, this animal has a head something like that of a cat or a tiger. This is the reason why that the *chi* dragon is also commonly called the “*chi* tiger” (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 283). Most *chi* dragon considered in this thesis are very typical and show these characteristics; the one illustrated in Fig. 7-50 is one of the best examples of all.

The *chi* dragons of the Yuan Dynasty were normally portrayed in distinctively lively and vigorous fashion, and usually carved with some background, such as clouds. Very often, they were carved on something which had a practical function, such as an arm-rest, an ornament, or a plaque of some kind. The creature’s body was normally smooth, without any decoration (Fig. 7-49), but if there was any decoration, it was simple and in the form of a long incision from its shoulders along its dorsal spine to the very end of its tail (Fig. 7-52 and Fig. 7-53). A few short parallel incision lines in pairs were sometimes carved at 90 degree angles to the line of the spine. The *chi* dragon remained a popular subject in the dynasties following the Yuan period. It seems, however, to have lost its lively appearance in the later dynasties (Zhou Nanquan, 1994, p. 318). In the latter part of the Ming Dynasty, for example, the *chi* dragon had noticeably declined, to the stage where it had almost vanished (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 287). It did not re-appear until the late years of the Qing Dynasty, hundreds of years later (Childs-Johnson, 1999, no. 99; p. 162).

Finally, the fish-dragon is our last major type of dragon of the Yuan period. The fish-dragon had wings and a fish-tail, and was believed to have the power of transforming

itself, from a fish, usually a carp, into the form of this dragon (Nott, 1962, p. 67). As discussed in Chapter Seven, the fish-dragon transformation symbolised the wish to “reach a superior status” and “pass the examinations into officialdom”. There are three jade fish-dragons considered in this thesis (Fig. 7-2, Fig. 7-3 and Fig. 7-30), each with the head of a dragon, a scaled body, fish-tailed rear, and wings with feathers. Because of this last anatomical feature they are not proper fish-dragons, They do, however, display the ability to swim in water, to fly in the air and to exercise the supernatural powers of the dragon in general, thus having all the desired features that people of antiquity could have possibly imagined for them.

The fish-dragon was not an invention of the Yuan period (Xu Naixiang, et al, 1987, p. 40). Its shape and concept could have been influenced by Buddhism from India, in which one of the river demons is a composite of the whale, the crocodile and the elephant. The Chinese dragon is also sometimes believed to stem from the crocodile. Both dragon and fish were used in rites when praying for rain in the Yuan court. The anatomical inking of the dragon with the fish could have come about simply because these two creatures were both viewed as having some physical or supernatural function in the control of water.

- ***Phoenixes (3)***

The phoenix is the most frequent fabulous mystical bird depicted in Chinese art. It is wondrous flying creature and believed to have been derived from a tribal totem (Zhang Wenmeng, 1986, p. 510). It has long been said to be the queen of all birds, and to only reveal itself to man in times of peace and prosperity (Goette, 1937, p. 273). It is said to symbolise the five Cardinal Virtues: virtue, justice, morality, humanity and trust (Brinker, et al, 1989, pl.76). It is the emblem of the empress, and as such is the counterpart of the dragon, the emblem of the emperor (Nott, 1962, p. 96). The phoenix became an object of worship during the Han Dynasty (Burkhardt, 1982, p. 188). Claims that the phoenix had paid a visit were often made at the proclamation of a successful reign, or to justify a succession, including the founding of a new Dynasty, such as that of the Ming Dynasty (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 45).

For this thesis, the phoenix appears three times in jade, in Fig. 6-12, Fig. 6-13 and Fig. 7-55, and we see it in textiles as well (No. 57), metal-work (No. 58) and stone sculpture (No. 27). The jade illustrated in Fig. 6-12 is a very finely carved piece of jade marquetry, and the only specimen of its kind found in the entire Qing Court Collection (Zhou Nanquan. 1995, no. 138). The jade object shown in Fig. 6-13, although from a private collection, has every quality which might be associated with a use of it in the emperor's court. Its translucent appearance, white to light green in colour, and extremely skilful craftsmanship, both emphasise its superior status. These two jade phoenixes are both carved in fine open-work, and are delicately and elegantly produced.

The phoenix is described in various ways, deprived from its original definition in *Explaining Writing and Elucidating Characters*. It is said, for example, that the bird has the head of a pheasant, the crown of a Mandarin-duck, the beak of a swallow, the back of a tortoise and the tail of a fish (Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 148). The bird's tail is sometimes described as having twelve feathers, each of which has the five colours of the cardinal virtues (Nicholas, 1968, p. 112). Goette described the phoenix as a creature with eyes of a man, the brow of a swallow, and the back of a tortoise (Goette, 1937, p. 273). The bird is even believed to have some of the physical characteristics found in the falcon (Whittick, 1960, p. 265). The phoenix depicted in art, however, is seldom seen with a complete combination of anything like the above-mentioned features, but still as an auspicious avian creature, a composite of features assembled from the individually selected parts of other creatures and birds. What is almost always common to them all, though, is the bird's crowned head and its fabulous tail with fantastic feathers resembling those of the peacock or the pheasant.

The phoenix is called *fenghuang* 凤凰 in Chinese, a compound word written with two characters. The first one, *feng* 凤 means "male phoenix", and the second, *huang* 凰 means "female phoenix". This compound word seems to have been defined long ago, in a book called 毛诗草木鸟兽鱼疏 (*Commentaries on the plants, trees, birds,*

animals and fish in the Mao Odes), which was written sometime during the years 770-476BC (Lu Ji, et al. *Wu State*, vol.70; p. 12). In keeping with the dual nature of the generic compound word, Chinese art often shows two phoenixes dancing together, a male and a female, as in the stone sculpture illustrated in No. 27. Of the two phoenixes on this stone sculpture excavated from the ruins of Yuan Dadu, one is rendered with a splendid tail of five feathered branches, standing for the five colours. It is probably a male, as in the world of birds, the male is almost always more elaborately decorated and more vividly coloured, than the female. The other phoenix on this stone sculpture is probably the female bird, and is depicted with a relatively simpler tail of only two branches. It is, however, likewise fabulous, with its elegant curves and twirled whirled adornment. An additional example of this kind can be found illustrated in No. 27, which shows a pair of phoenixes dancing around one another. The male has a five-branched feathered tail, that of the female being shorter. Comparing these examples with the phoenixes portrayed in jade in this thesis, we find that the jade phoenix-depiction are all of the fabulous male phoenix, for the obvious reason of its beautiful tails.

However, the bird *Feng Huang* was later re-examined in the most ancient Chinese dictionary *Explaining Writing and Elucidating Characters*, with a different explanation:

凤，蛇颈，鱼尾，龙纹龟背，燕颌，鸡吻。五色备举……

见则天下太平。(Xu Shen, Han Dynasty, p. 148).

Feng, (with) snake's neck, fish's tail, turtle's back with dragon's pattern, swallow's cheek and chicken's beak. (It has) five colours. (When it is seen), the world is in peace.

However, the second word of the bird, *Huang* 凰, simply did not exist in *Explaining Writing and Elucidating Characters*, which is widely accepted to be the most authentic and complete ancient Chinese dictionary! This has raised a question about the existence of the bird *Feng Huang* 凤凰. When carefully exams the explanations of the bird *Feng* 凤 in this ancient dictionary, it is interesting to find that a piece of

comment about the relationship of the bird *Feng* and the first Emperor in Chinese legend. It says that when the *Feng* appeared, *Huang Di*, Emperor of Zhouchengwang was born. It celebrates this happy and prosperous sight of *You Feng You Huang* 有凤有皇 (There is a *Feng* and there is the Emperor), although *Huang* here is not the bird, but the Emperor in Chinese legend.

It could well be, therefore, that there had never been a word *Huang* for the bird in the first place, but only a word *Huang* for the Emperor. After centuries' evolution of Chinese words and development of its language, the word *Huang* 皇 for the Emperor who was born in the light of the appearance of the bird *Feng* 凤 became a part of the auspicious creature, and they were together called *Feng Huang* as the legend bird. The character *Huang* 皇 for the Emperor has been slightly altered to make it share the same component with the word *Feng* 凤. They are now today's *Feng Huang* 凤凰, auspicious bird, rather than a bird *Feng* and the Emperor *Huang*.

Munsterberg has put forward the view that what is known as the phoenix is a purely Western concept which has no relevance to the "Chinese phoenix" (Munsterberg, 1986, p. 108). According to Williams, the phoenix in the West was nothing but an Argus pheasant (*Argusianus argus*) or a peacock (Williams, 1941, p. 323). Munsterberg argues that the Chinese phoenix was a much more fanciful bird, which came from no naturalistic source and represents a magical symbol rather than a decorative design (Munsterberg, 1986, p. 109). This notion sounds inadequate, especially since the natural characteristics found in other birds and animals so closely resemble those that are found on the phoenix.

- ***Dragon and Phoenix***

When the dragon and phoenix are depicted together, it chimes with a popular Chinese propitious saying: *Long feng cheng xiang* 龙凤呈祥 (Good fortune of the dragon and phoenix) (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 40). Apart from its imperial significance as discussed above, the dragon is said, in this combination, to be the symbol of the male cosmic force, while the phoenix is that of the female cosmic

force, the two symbolising respectively the bridegroom and the bride in marriage. This symbolism can also be found in Hebrew Kabalic philosophy (Shumaker, 1982, p. 195), where the phoenix is known as the Hermes Bird and is also paired with the dragon, an obvious parallel to the symbolical pairing of the Chinese phoenix and dragon. Even today the symbol of the phoenix and the dragon can still be seen on invitation cards to wedding banquets (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 44).

No matter how ancient the Chinese custom of expressing blessings for good fortune and happy marriage may be, invoking the image of the dragon and phoenix for marriages in general seems to have been a relatively recent symbolism, no doubt forbidden for general use as the symbols involved were for many dynasties claimed exclusively for the emperor and empress (Xu Naixiang, et al, 1987, p. 44). In the *History of the Yuan*, it clearly defines:

服色等第：…… 贵贱有章…… 蒙古人不在禁限，
惟不许服龙凤纹。(Song Lian, et al, 1370, p. 1942).

Rankings of costume and colours: ... These must differentiate
between the nobles and the commoners. ... The Mongols are not
restricted by this prohibition, except that they are not permitted to
wear dragon and phoenix patterns.

The *History of the Yuan* details the sumptuary regulations further:

天子之服……金绣龙五色罗，则冠金凤顶笠。(Song Lian, et
al, 1370, p. 1938).

The costume of the Son of Heaven, ... (is) in the silk of five
colours, with the dragon woven in gold, and a hat with a broad
brim and topped by a phoenix knob in gold.

These records leave no doubt or ambiguity as to how strictly regulated was the usage of dragon and phoenix designs, and how such designs were restricted to the emperor and empress during the Yuan Dynasty. The jade dragon and phoenix shown in Fig. 7-

55 is thus almost certain to have been used in the Yuan court for the emperor, although its precise function as a final is still being studied and discussed.

- ***Other Mythical Animals (10)***

Under this sub-title, fantastic creatures other than the dragon and phoenix will be analysed. Certain other creatures, which, although not selected for discussion in this section, also have some trace of “mixed” physical features, have already been dealt with, earlier above, under sections concerning real-life creatures. The animal shown in Fig. 7-67, for example, has been dealt with in the section entitled “Dragons”, but the dragon concerned certainly shows some of the characteristics of a lion, having four lion-type paws, and standing on a lotus, as in the conventional motif of Buddhism that involves the lion (Nott, 1962, p. 132). The figure shown in Fig. 7-68, on the other hand, is mentioned in the section “Lions” above, even though it was depicted with a scaled or dragon-like chest, because the animal as a whole does look more like a lion or lion-dog than like a dragon. Creatures such as these are categorised in the group of creatures to which they show the closest possible resemblance, rather than under the current section, as they bear only some relatively minor “mixture of features” or “deformation in relationship to the conventional”. In other words, animals under this present section have no single truly identifiable feature, or have the features of many animals.

- **Winged creatures (2):**

There are two winged creatures in the jades considered for this thesis, illustrated in Fig. 3-5 and Fig. 3-6. The first is termed a “one-horned creature” and the second is described as a *qilin* in the catalogue of the Museum of East Asian Art (Forsyth, et al, 1994, p. 344). These two animals look very similar, and share number of anatomical features.

The *qilin*, like the dragon and phoenix, is one of the oldest of the mythical creatures depicted in Chinese art (Wirgin, 1979, p. 195). It too seems to have had some rather confusing descriptions of its physique. It was described in *Collections of Sancai Illustrations* as having a colourful stag's body, a horse's hooves, an ox's tail, a wolf's forehead, and a single horn with a fleshy tip, only the male having a horn, on its forehead, or sometimes two horns, the female having no horn (Wang Xi, et al, 1609, p. 2201). Another description of this creature reads: an antelope's body, its skin is of the five colours of the world - red, yellow, blue, white and black. It is yellow beneath, and walks on water as well as on land (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 115). Elsewhere, this creature is sometimes said to be in the form of a deer, with slender legs and cloven hoofs, and to have the head of a dragon, a curled and bushy tail, and a mane-like feature on its shoulders (Hobson, 1923, pp. 131-132). It is also said that the *qilin* was simply a lion-like creature (Wirgin, 1979, p. 194).

The image of the lion-like creature has certainly been identified as the *qilin* in some writings, because it was believed to be one of the Chinese versions of the lion in art (Ball, 1969, p. 56). As discussed before, some of the versions of lions in Chinese art were the prototypes of the Pekinese dog - the lion-dog. Nott strongly felt that the *qilin* must not be confused with the Buddhist lion or the lion-dog, since the *qilin* was really quite distinctively different from the Pekinese dog, being indeed completely unrelated to any form of dog (Nott, 1962, p. 77). The *qilin* is, in his opinion, an animal of "the unicorn type". To support his theory, he showed a picture of the *qilin* carved in jade (Nott, 1962, Fig. 49; p. 77). This picture happens coincidentally to be one of the drawings shown in No. 47. It does not seem to depict anything like a unicorn. The unicorn, however, is an artistic product of the Western world, being a mythical animal which may either resemble a horse with a single straight horn protruding from its forehead (Allen, 1987, p. 826), or be an animal with a body like a horse's, a tail like that of a pig, a head like a deer's, and a characteristic long, sharp spear-like horn like protruding forward from its forehead (Borges, 1964, p. 141).

When the two winged creatures in jade (Fig. 3-5 and Fig. 3-6) are examined, they don't appear to be anything like the horse, certainly as far as their hooves, their heads and their "flattened" horns with a fleshy tips are concerned. Their faces and sturdy bodies, however, do share some similarities with the Chinese lion-dog: their large heads are almost out of proportion, they have large, protruding eyes, and their legs are short and stubby. They seem more like winged lion-dogs than horse-headed unicorns. Another theory defined the winged lion as a chimera (Nott, 1962, p. 79). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the chimera was a "monster in Greek mythology with a lion's head, goat's body, and serpent's tail" (Allen, 1987, p. 121). Here again, the evidence would seem to suggest that the description does not seem to fit the "lion-like" images on the two jades. This suggests that the Chinese winged and horned creature is a Chinese invention in its own right. The concepts of the Western unicorn and chimera would not appear to be suitable to, or compatible with, the one of Chinese mythology.

One additional point should be made. Rudenko carried out some research, in considerable depth, on the appearance of the winged-lion motif in the art of the northern nomads. He concluded from his study of several thousand works of art of the Mongolian and North Chinese tribes, most of which were ornaments cast in bronze (what are known as the Ordos bronzes), that there was not a single depiction of winged lion (Rudenko, 1958, p. 120). This kind of fantastic animal of Upper Asia evidently did not penetrate eastwards beyond the Altai. This suggests that what we are dealing with is a purely Chinese winged animal, rather than anything derived from early Western or Ordos myths.

As far as the term for the winged creature generally called the *qilin* is concerned, there is some confusion as to precisely what it was called in China. It is believed by some that *qi* is the male Chinese "chimera", and *lin* the female "chimera" (Nott, 1962, p. 79). The term *qilin* does not, however, appear to have been defined. *Bixie* is the name given to the drawing of the creature shown in No. 47, and this creature is said to be, artistically speaking, a modified lion with wings (Nott, 1962, p. 79). The

junni, is another term believed to describe the lion-like animal with wings (*Er Ya*, Zhou Dynasty, Animal Section, p. 7), while in *Collections of Sancai Illustrations*, the *junni* is a “tiger-like” animal (Wang Si, et al, 1609, p. 2201). Because of the existence of too many such ambiguous and confusing descriptions of this kind of winged animal, and of too many ambiguities concerning the names, I call these creatures “winged animals”, rather than risk causing more confusion by trying to provide more or new terms in a vain attempt to identify the unidentifiable.

This winged animal is often depicted in Chinese art, and plays an auspicious role. It was regarded as the symbol of grandeur, felicity, illustrious offspring and wise administration (Wirgin, 1979, p. 194). It was said that it appears only when a king of the highest benevolence sits upon the throne, or when a sage is about to be born. It was described as a form of animal (Bushell, 1910, p. 594) that treads so lightly as to leave no footprints, and so carefully as to crush no living thing. For this reason perhaps, Goette said that this winged animal was the patron-protector of the young (Goette, 1937, p. 273).

- Tiger-headed and phoenix-tailed leopards (1)

The animal in Fig. 5-33 is a tiger-headed, leopard-bodied, phoenix-tailed one. It is discussed in Chapter 4, as one of the Autumn Mountain Jades. The piece contains the major characters and message of the hunting scene, with a large carnivorous predator pacing in the forest. Despite its feathered and branched tail, this creature shows a number of strong resemblances to a large cat's physique. Its spotted body strongly suggests the possibility of its being a leopard. If so, it could have been modelled on one of the three common sub-species of Chinese leopard, *F. pardus fontanieri*, *F. pardus fontanierii* or *F. pardus orientalis*, living in north and north-eastern China (Gao Yaotian, 1987, p. 352). Its Chinese name is *jqianbao* or *ynqianbao* (gold-coin leopard or silver-coin leopard) from the shape the shape, and according to the colours, of the spots on its fur (Zhen Wushen, 1994, p. 104).

The tiger and leopard were indeed regarded as almost the same animals in ancient Chinese writings (*Er Ya*, Zhou Dynasty, Animal Section, pp. 3-4). Apart from their cat-like similarities, the tiger and the leopard also share popularity in folklore and mythology, both in old Chinese writings and in the West (Zhong Ming, 1995, p. 139; Carter, 1957, p. 69). The leopard, as recorded by Marco Polo, was hunted, captured and then kept in Khubilai's animal collection (Polo, 13th century, p. 142). Together with the tiger, the leopard was often employed by hunters to pursue deer and other wild game (White, 1936, p. 49). It came to be used as an emblem of bravery, and was associated with martial ferocity (Ong Hean-Tatt, 1993, p. 202). The leopard motif is recorded as having been employed for the 4th ranking military officials in the Ming Dynasty imperial court (Wang Xi, et al, 1609, p. 1530).

This leopard-like animal in jade is not a leopard, however. Its obviously feathered tail bears no resemblance to the furred tail shown in *Collection des Mammifères du Musée Hoang ho Pai ho à Tien Tsin, Fam. Felidae* (Jakovleff, 1932, Fig. 1). This mythical creature is more like a mammal than the bird, but its feathered and branched tail looks like that of the imagined phoenix. In real life, the leopard catches and eats birds of the Phasianidae family, such as the Brown-eared Pheasant (*Crossoptilon mantchuricum*) and the Common Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) (Wang Jianpin, et al, 1995, p. 42). Many birds in this family, especially the Brown-eared Pheasant, have a splendid long tail with beautiful feathers (Shi Guangfu, et al, 1996, p. 199). Whether this could have been the reason for depicting the leopard with a feathered tail in ancient times remains unanswered, and is a topic for further studies.

- **Deer-like animals (2)**

Fig. 5-29 illustrates two animals with horns, beards like that of the goat, and manes like that of the horse. These two animals, however, appear more like deer than either goats or horses, since they have bodies and long tails both resembling those of the Père David's Deer. This jade object is categorised there as one of the Autumn Mountain Jades, obviously corresponding to that motif because the animals on it are

depicted in the motif's general style, in view of the background oak-leaves, rocks on the ground and two deer (in this case two deer-like animals), one in front of the other. This jade does not, however, strictly-speaking use Autumn Mountain motif, as above the two animals it displays some *lingzhi*-shaped clouds, which are symbols of longevity and immortality (Brinker, et al, 1989, Fig. 81). To enhance this longevity motif, two deer-like animals were added, with wing-like decoration on their bodies. That the deer is also a sign of long life has been discussed earlier above, and the wings evoke the Buddhist idea of flying away, or detachment, from reality. This jade object is cleverly designed to combine the nomadic hunting-scene with a Buddhist concept.

- Fabulous animals on the Great Urn (5)

There are five unidentified creatures carved on the Great Jade Urn (Fig. 4-14). They have been named in Chapter Four of this thesis as the sheep-headed animal, the horned-head animals (2), the rabbit-headed animal and the deer-headed animal. Although these creatures vaguely resemble certain real animals, sheep, rabbit and deer, or have features present on certain real animals, the horns, they in no other way look like anything real. For this reason, these strange beasts are sometimes differently described. Zhou Nanquan, for example, uses the term "sea rhinoceros" for the "horned-head animal" (Zhou Nanquan, 1980, p. 23). Yang Boda refers to a "sea frog" (Yang Boda, 1991, p. 132), which could be the rabbit-headed animal described in this thesis. With many authors, these mythical animals are only ever mentioned in a very general way, as "fabulous animals", to avoid any chance of misidentification (Zhang Lanxian, et al, 1997, p. 44).

Fabulous animals such as these are not found mentioned individually in any of the official records of the Yuan. The Great Jade Urn depicts a number of these animals, and, although the creation of the Urn was an important event recorded in *History of*

the Yuan (Chapter Four), and it was repaired and polished several times during the Qing Dynasty, there are no clear records to identify these mythical animals, not even though 40 poets were ordered by the Qianlong Emperor of the Qing Dynasty to write some 40 poems in praise of the Great Jade Urn. It may be important to point out that the commonly known creatures on the Urn such as the dragons, horse, pig and conches, are either of a much bigger size, or in a more eye-catching position, than the as yet unidentified creatures, which are noticeably smaller, or partially hidden in disguised locations. Further research and more archaeological evidence are needed to discover the significance of these mythical creatures, and the underlying reason for their less salient positions on the Urn.

8.2 SUMMARY

8.2.1 Animals

The animals chosen to be depicted in jade at the Yuan court, do not seem to have been those with which the Mongols had most close contact. The “five snouts” of the Mongols, the horse, camel, bovine (yak and cattle), sheep and goat (Bartholomew, 1995a, p. 99), are found to have not been the major images for jade-carvers in the court. A horse was, however, carved on the Great Jade Urn (Fig. 4-14), and the jade catalogue of this thesis contains another jade horse on a paperweight (Fig. 6-3). These two horses are portrayed in slightly different styles, although both are depicted naturalistically. The only camel studied in this thesis is the Dromedary Camel, even though the Bactrian Camel is native to the Mongols’ grasslands. There are no yak, cattle or sheep images examined in this thesis. Although three goats have been considered in Chapter Three (Fig. 3-1, 3-2 & 3-3), none of them is directly from one of the imperial collections, nor is there any historical or imperial record on them to say where they came from. That they have been chosen for this thesis is mainly

because of the image they present (Chapter Three), and because of certain distinctive characteristics of them that show a Yuan-period style.

There is a special group of creatures which are used to depict typical Mongol hunting scenes. They are limited in number to a fairly small range of species, including the tiger, bear, deer, falcon and swan (with the addition of those in Fig. 5-29 two deer-type animals showing certain mythical characteristics). Detailed discussions have been presented, in Chapter Five, concerning the hunting scene. Each of these animals has been analysed with respect to its significance in history and art, at the beginning of this chapter.

In addition to the above-mentioned animals, the pig and the lion (or lion-dog) are another two mammals associated with the Mongols. As intensively discussed under the subtitles “Pigs”, “Lions” and “Lion-dogs”, these animals were depicted more because of their religious connotations, deriving from Hinduism (the pig cult) and Buddhism (the worship of the lion and lion-dog), than for the sake of naturalistic depiction. In *Secret History of the Mongols*, images of Buddha was mentioned (*The Secret History of the Mongols*, 13th century, p. 208). The Mongols had Buddhist influence in life and art long before their empire.

There is one monkey in a jade illustrated in (Fig. 7-34) which may have been depicted more because of the jade’s Chinese owner and his view of Chinese culture (Chapter Seven), than because of any special significance the monkey may have to the Mongols, even though this jade was made during the Yuan period.

Other jade creatures presented in this thesis are mostly Chinese in origin, although the use of these creatures was probably adopted by the Mongols later. They are the egret (or heron), crane, peacock, eagle, tortoise and fish. Biologically, they may exist in Mongolia, as in the cases of the eagle and the fish. In the realm of ideas, however, they do not seem to have borne any profound cultural or historical significance for the Mongols, seeming just to have functioned as pleasant decoration in jade.

The mythical animals chosen for carving in jade during the Yuan Dynasty were the dragon, the phoenix and a variety of winged creatures (Fig. 3-5 & Fig. 3-6) and horned beasts (Fig. 4-14). The dragon and phoenix have been employed throughout Chinese history to convey the superior power and magnificence of the emperor and empress. They have also been widely worshipped by the northern nomads since prehistoric times. The winged, horned, and other fabulous creatures derived from animals in the wild (Fig. 5-29 & Fig. 5-33) or from fantasising imagination (Fig. 4-14). The discussions in previous chapters and under the subtitles of this chapter have unveiled some aspects of both their Chinese and their Mongol backgrounds.

8.2.2 Subjects

The creatures which appeared in the jades produced in the Yuan court and in other jade workshops in China do not exhibit a wide range of either species or motifs. The following discussion will try to reveal some of the significance of why certain creatures were favoured for carving in jade. As mentioned in Chapter One, the creatures selected for analysis in this thesis have been almost exclusively those which were depicted against a background or with human figures, being what are termed “jade pictures”. Jade creatures set in full relief on their own have been largely excluded, unless there has been archaeological evidence in support of their dating (Chapter One). The creatures in jades can be broadly divided into three groups in terms of subject: imperial association, the hunting scene, and conventional concepts.

The first group, the one with imperial associations, such as the jade seals and jade ritual objects, has been intensively discussed in Chapter Four. The dragons on jade seals, with a function in sacrificial rites, uniformly have a fearsome stare, dragons being depicted more playfully on scholarly objects, inlays, belt plaques and sword-guard decorations.

The second group, that of the hunting scene, exclusively involves the falcon and the swan (or goose), this sub-group being called the Spring Water Jades, and the tiger (or leopard), bear and deer, this sub-group being called Autumn Mountain Jades. This group clearly depicted the Mongols' style of living, and shows their taste in art.

The third group is a series of Chinese conventional concepts conveying a number of, mostly Chinese, abstractions with philosophical, moral or other implications, being motifs such as those of "the Hero" (Fig. 5-34), "the Grand Preceptor and Junior Preceptor" (Fig. 6-1), "High Position and Great Wealth" (Fig. 6-11), "the Five Human Relationships" (Fig. 6-14, 7-59, 7-60, 7-61, 7-62, 7-63 & 7-64), "the Promoted Scholar" (Fig. 7-2), "Crane and Deer in Spring" (Fig. 7-18 & 7-19), "Dragon Teaching Its Young" (Fig. 7-23, 7-24 & 7-25,), and "Remuneration of An Official" (Fig. 7-27). These motifs, in addition to other symbolic creatures, such as the deer and the tortoise (symbolising longevity) and the fish (symbolising surplus, abundance), can be found throughout Chinese art, even under the Mongols during the Yuan period. Their deeply rooted cultural significance was well represented in jade at the Yuan court.

8.2.3 Materials

As mentioned throughout this thesis, stone materials of top quality, such as the mutton-fat jade from Khotan, and semi-precious stones, such as feldspar, agate, lapis lazuli and chalcedony (Appendix 6: "Chinese Jades"), can all be found represented among the jades considered for this thesis. Although it may be difficult to precisely identify each object's mineralogical composition (Chapter One), it is sometimes possible to acquire an indication of the material and its quality from the stone's surface appearance. The imperial jade seals mentioned in Chapter Four are almost all made from top-quality jade. The jade seal illustrated in Fig. 4-6, for example, is without doubt made from nephrite of first-class quality. Its moist appearance is astoundingly sumptuous, and it has the dazzling extravagant lustre of mutton-fat Khotan jade.

A mere translucent gleam may not have been enough to convey mighty imperial power and magnificence. So other kinds of jade, such as the dark, deep and glorious *shu* jade, were employed to make such imposing imperial articles as the Great Jade Urn, with its tremendous power and mood of lofty benignity. Although *shu* jade is not, as far as its mineral content is concerned, top-class jade, it was the best possible material for such a task, where the conveying of weighty quality and mighty prestige was required.

Before the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty in China, the Mongols had a tradition of adorning themselves with agate. They quickly adopted the Chinese aspects of jade culture, and learned to employ various jades and semi-precious stones for different purposes and usage. White, green, dark green, brown and multi-coloured jades were commonly chosen, while agate continued to be used by the ordinary folk.

8.2.4 Carving Fashions

From the catalogue and analysis of jades in this thesis, it is shown that the jade craftsmen of the Yuan period were innovative, and developed a rich variety of styles and motifs. One of the most distinctive carving styles was the open-work used in jades during the Song Dynasty. The patterns and layout commonly created in relief and open-work were mostly on a flat surface (Chang Suxia, 1993, p. 231). During the Yuan Dynasty, the styles of relief and open-work developed in a more complicated and intricate manner, and, although often carried out on flat surfaces, were also to be found on multi-layered, three-dimensional objects, such as hat-knobs or incense-burner finials (Fig. 7-60). Creatures and plants (trees) were depicted in a criss-cross network of multi-inner-layered landscapes.

Another characteristic is the relatively rough carving style. A typical example is shown in Fig. 5-1, which, although depicting the spring hunting scene vividly, has an unfinished feel to it. A number of marks of drilling can be seen clearly on the lotus

flowers and leaves (on the right and left of the object). These have obviously not been “tidied up” after the object was made. Wherever drilled holes were required, for instance to suspend an object from a belt, they were drilled almost anywhere. It does not seem to have mattered whether they disrupted the layout, or even if they spoiled the overall beauty of the piece. For example, a hole was drilled through the rump of the small lion illustrated in Fig. 6-1, when it could just as easily have been drilled somewhere that would have avoided damaging the lion. Similarly, in the jade shown in Fig. 6-14, a noticeable hole has been drilled right through the falcon’s body, thereby ruining the appearance of the bird. The hole could have been made in many other places that would have left the bird and indeed the whole scene intact.

This bold carving-style was the natural result of a number of unconstrained carving methods. For example, lines indicating branches, stalks and midribs of leaves were made with strong, deep cuts (Fig. 5-1). Creatures were also often depicted with very deep and wide cuts, especially around their necks (Fig. 5-31a & Fig. 5-31b), at their joints between legs and cheeks. In comparison with the finely polished and smoothed Song Dynasty jade creatures, such as the one illustrated in Fig. 5-27, the Mongol jade creatures do look distinctly rugged.

8.2.5 Use of Stone’s Colours

It is believed that during Yuan times a yellowish or roast-chestnut colour became fashionable for jade (Forsyth, et al, 1994, p. 325). The brownish and yellowish colours were in fact often the colours of the jade skin, rather than those of the jade itself. It was brownish or yellowish jade skin that was in favour, not necessarily jade of brown colour (Chapter Two). Some jades have brown jade skins but are not brown in colour. The Great Jade Urn, for example, has a dark green skin, while the jade inlay illustrated in Fig. 6-10 is almost dark purple in colour. The common complex minerals which cause coloration to the jade skin are identified as: magnetite (green), phosphorite (light grey, yellow, brown and blackish dark), lamprite (yellow),

epidosite (green), diopside (very light, with hardly any colour³⁰), dolomite (white), picotite (dark green) and quartz (sometimes grey or light pinkish grey) (Tang Yanling, 1994, p. 73). Jades with these mineral “effects” were also in high demand during the Yuan, and were widely employed to give dramatic effects to objects or to enhance such effects.

During the Yuan Dynasty, “skin” colour was exploited not only in jades but also in other kinds of stone. A good example of this latter usage is the agate monkey in Fig. 7-34. Although not very clear on this piece, where it can only faintly be seen, the “skin” plays a “natural” part in depicting the monkey’s minutely annulated appearance, especially over the fore part of the body. The colours of the agate were cleverly used, being carved to show the features of a real-life monkey. The brown areas of the agate are employed to depict the brown fur of a realistically portrayed monkey’s back, head and body, and the grey marks of the stone for the monkey’s chest and abdomen. This way of using the natural colours of the material is in evidence in many of the jades and semi-precious stones worked by Yuan period craftsmanship. Some Autumn Mountain Jades, for example, also display this fashion for using “skin” colour. Fig. 5-30 shows a jade with a picture utilising the jade skin.

A tiger and its young are portrayed partially by using the “skin’s” yellow portions, and tree leaves also wholly utilise its yellowish brown, a beautiful autumn colour. The sun is shining with its gorgeous golden colour. This method of jade-carving is, according to Yang Boda, to be defined as a phenomenon of “going back to the original jade material in order to depict natural beauty” (Yang Boda, 1993, p. 17).

Gao Lian suggested that the use of different colour-areas of a jade pebble to enhance the effect of a group of figures carved out of a single stone was a Song invention (Gao Lian, Ming Dynasty, p. 472). It was during the Yuan Dynasty, however, that utilising the natural colour of the jade skin first found widespread favour and was

³⁰ Diopside amphibolite is composed of amphibolite granules of very light colour (Wu Shuren, 1990, p. 535).

extensively developed. For example, jade Fig. 7-47 has two eagles carved with a surface of reddish brown jade skin to enhance the colour and faithfully render of their wings, the unworked darker skin making the two birds outstanding in form and hue.

8.2.6 Style

- *Imitation of Ancient Motifs*

The imitation of archaic jades was as much in fashion during the Yuan Dynasty as it had been during the Song Dynasty, although there were, naturally, distinctive developments and emphases which produced significant differences (Nott, 1962, pp. 60-61). Approximately half the jade objects included in *Illustrations of Ancient Jades* are archaic-style jades made in the Yuan court (Zhu Derun, 1341, pp. 602-615). Most of these are ring-shaped ornaments and belt-buckles in the motifs of the “main-style” dragon and the *chi* dragon. The most distinctive characteristic of Yuan archaic jades, however, is that they imitated jade shapes or patterns from ancient bronzes, rather than having been intended as copying any actual ancient jades (Yin Zhiqiang, 1999, p. 80). The quality of the jade used to make archaic-style jades was normally quite good, and it was not artificially burnt or dyed to fake an ancient appearance. For this reason, Yuan archaic jades noticeably displayed a number of the same characteristics of Yuan craftsmanship as shown in Fig. 4-12 & Fig. 4-13. The dragon on the jade shown in the former, a jade jar, is clearly a Yuan dragon. The archaic shape of the jade illustrated in the latter proclaims its Mongol identity (Chapter Four). Even though it depicts, in a usual manner, large flowers and leaves, both worked so as to splendidly reflect ancient glory, it does so unmistakably in the carving fashion of Yuan times. What seems to have mattered most, was not the reproduction of any ancient original in terms either of material or function, but simply the depiction for its own sake, with no more than a general implication of associations with the ancient past. Archaic jades of the Yuan period are not, however, a major point of discussion in this thesis, as the fashion for them was not a major trend in animal portrayal.

- ***Depiction of Animals***

As far as motifs are concerned, the most typical of them all employed in jade by the Mongols during Yuan times was the hunting scene, the spring hunt of the falcon attacking the swan, and the autumn hunt of the tiger chasing the deer (Chapter Five). Depiction of predators and prey in jades showed no strong influence from the “animal style” of the Xiongnu (the Huns) or the nomadic tribes of the Assyria and Persian spheres, which had been dominant in bronzes before the Mongol times, the ones termed Ordos Bronzes, for the place where they were unearthed (Watson, 1974, p. 60; Amur Barto. 1997, p. 112). This was probably because the Xiongnu divided at the end of the first century AD, into the northern Xiongnu, who went westwards, and the southern Xiongnu, who moved to the Mongolian grasslands. The development of animal style in Inner and Outer Mongolia, after many centuries of cultural exchanges and fusion between several nomadic tribes and nations, was independent of its original roots (Amur Barto. 1997, p. 112). The Xiongnu of those later times produced many more depiction of animal and animal-bird combats between tiger and ox, tiger and deer, deer and boar, tiger and eagle, tiger and horse, and dog and horse. It was a powerful and unique style, with creatures fighting, their bodies twisting, and dying in characteristically bloody manner. During the Yuan period, however, the “animal style” was almost exclusively represented in jades by depiction of a falcon catching swans or geese, or, more tranquilly, of a tiger, leopard or bear juxtaposed with, rather than chasing, deer. Animal motifs stimulated the Mongols to fresh ideas, and developed a realism in the portrayal of animals which is reflected in the jades of the Yuan period, with a style quite distinct from the usual symmetrical designs on the bronzes made by the Xiongnu.

- ***Depiction of Plants***

Many trees and flowers are found in Yuan jade ornaments. Peonies, plum-blossoms or pine trees (Fig. 7-18), sometimes amid bamboo groves and with *lingzhi*-shaped clouds (Fig. 7-19), are very common motifs in Chinese art. The sacred *lingzhi* was symbolic of longevity. That it had life-prolonging attributes was a belief derived from

the ancient custom of placing dried cuttings of this plant upon the altar of Taoist temples (Nott, 1962, p. 129). The *lingzhi*-shaped clouds are believed to have been more often employed in jades during the Yuan period than during the Song Dynasty (Zhang Guangwen, 1999, p. 216). Future research is certain to provide more evidence on this matter when the dating of jades becomes more accurate. Plum-blossom, the pine tree and bamboo, collectively called “the Three Winter Friends” (*Sui han san you* 岁寒三友), are often shown together, as in Fig. 5-33. The bamboo is used a symbol of the lofty aspirations of the soul, its supple sturdiness being seen as a metaphor for the way in which the fine soul bends before the storms of life but does not break. Its green foliage is probably the reason for its also being regarded as an emblem of longevity, as in the case of the pine tree. Plum-blossom derives its significance as a symbol of longevity or endurance from the fact that it appears on the tree before any leaves do, and because it lasts a long while (Nott, 1962, p. 129). A porcelain vase of the Yuan Dynasty is found a typical example of this motif (No. 103).

Oak, elm, pine, alder and birch trees are popular as background for the designs of Autumn Mountains Jades. Although not all of them are of much or frequent significance in Chinese literature or art, they were common in scenes of hunting.

The peach is a symbol of the vernal sun. As a consequence, the peach-tree is said to possess more vitality than any other tree, and, on this account, it became one of the Taoist symbols of longevity and immortality (De Groot, 1892-1910, pp. 505; Mayors, 1874, p. 213). Fig. 5-22, for example, appears to have a stylised peach-tree in blossom. The tree sculpted on the jade shown in No. 38 was made in Hohhot in Inner Mongolia during Yuan times, and looks more like a peach-tree than any other kind of tree. Placing the peach-tree and deer together created a supreme symbolic combination for reinforcing the implication of, or wishes for, long or everlasting life.

The peony flower was an important decorative pattern in jades during the Yuan period (Fig. 6-12 & Fig. 6-14). It appears on many of the jades and other artefacts

considered in this thesis (Catalogue of Jade), and can be found used in its parallel arts of stone sculpture and lacquer of the same period, in which it is normally depicted as large flowers with large leaves.

- ***Depiction of Human Figures***

Although the human figure is not a major subject of this thesis, it has provided hard evidence facilitating the attribution of jades to the Yuan Dynasty. There are altogether 13 human figures considered (two on paperweights in Chapter Six, and 11 on belt-plaques in Chapter Seven), displaying various postures including sitting, and dancing. Their costumes are very distinctive, and all share the same strong national characteristics: hats with a scarf-type top (Fig. 6-3) or a wide brim (Fig. 7-5), a long gown with narrow sleeves (Fig. 7-7), tied with a belt or sash, and a pair of boots (Fig. 7-9). The animal husbandry activities with which they are often depicted and the costumes they wear speak loudly of their Mongol nationality and times.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

The scope this thesis has been partly governed by the availability of creatures depicted in jade. Surveying the assembly of jades which the thesis has considered, it would be at first appear that only a few creatures were singled out during the Yuan period for depiction in jade. Further analysis suggests that this may be a premature assumption, and that further examples of Yuan jade creatures remain to be identified. This thesis deals not only with the real creatures of Nature that played a prominent role in Yuan daily life, but also with some of mysterious significance, including conventional mythical creatures derived from legend and beliefs. Further exploration of archaeological and historical evidence in China will surely yield a more precise understanding of our general topic, and the conclusions presented here are merely an initial pause for reflection in the ongoing process of research in this field. They are a summary of the main points of the thesis, and an indication of the problems that remain regarding the study of the significance of animals, birds and fish in Yuan jades. This summing-up will, for the sake of its greater cohesion, concision and succinctness, not strictly follow the order of the thesis chapters.

9.1 CHOICE OF ANIMALS

My research on the significance of animals in Yuan jades has shown that this subject is affected by many large-scale historical and cultural factors, of a very wide range. It has attempted to describe “the combination of jade with the legendary Chinese bestiary”(Worrell, 1993, Foreword). This latter approach does not seem, however, to be sufficient on its own, since dynamic dynastic, nationalistic and artistic matters are also at issue. Animal taxonomy, general biology and ecology have also been introduced into the discussion, to help explain the depictions of creatures, which has led to the revelation of a number of additional pieces of information concerning various other matters that may have played a role in governing the Mongols’ choice and depiction of animals. My studies have discovered, as a preliminary result of this

comprehensive method, that there were indeed several major considerations determining the choice of certain animals and the manner of their depiction.

9.2 CHOICE OF LIFE-STYLE

An intense Yuan Dynasty interest in wildlife profoundly affected what was created in Yuan jade carving. New heights of realism were reached, which forcefully suggest careful observation and show meticulous attention to detail. Hunting scenes in jade were not the Mongols' exclusive invention, having already been in favour during the Jin and Liao Dynasties. The Mongols of the Yuan period, however, took the genre to a very high level, with birds and mammals depicted with almost anatomical accuracy. Carnivores, such as the tiger and bear, were frequently modelled as self-selecting material in jade, whereas others, such as the wolf, which was also a common animal well known to the Mongols, do not appear in jades of that time. The tiger, the "King of the Mountains", is a powerful and graceful animal, and it is easy therefore to see why it was chosen for depiction in Autumn Mountain Jades. The wolf, on the other hand, had the unpopular reputation of being a cunning animal (*The Secret History of the Mongols*, 13th century, p. 152), and may not have been so commonly portrayed for that very reason. Several deer species seem to have been regarded as suitable images to depict both aesthetically and with closeness to Nature. Wild pigs, perhaps because of their clumsy appearance, or perhaps they were just too familiar or ordinary without other significance of association, were less favoured by artists, and at present do not appear to have been carved on that precious material jade. The favourite motif of falcon and swan that epitomised the hunt, specifically the spring hunt, were regularly rendered.

Animals with unusual features or unusual behaviour, such as the "wig-headed" deer (Fig. 5-28) and the tiger "climbing a tree" (Fig. 5-31b), were carefully depicted in a way which was faithful to Nature. Even mythical animals, such as the "main-style" dragon and the *chi* dragon, were depicted as sharing several characteristics with real animals.

As “background” subjects, human figures and plants were no less naturalistically depicted. The horse-groom (Fig. 6-3), camel-handler (Fig. 6-4) and “lion-dancers” (Fig. 7-5, 7-6, 7-7 etc.) were all unquestionably and correctly uniformed in Mongol national costume.¹ Oak, elm, pine, alder and birch trees, bamboo, lotus and peony flowers, plum-blossoms, and water-plants were all depicted with great faithfulness to their models in Nature.

9.3 CHOICE OF ACCEPTANCE AND COMBINATION

It is widely agreed that one of the reasons that the Mongols won so many wars and succeeded in ruling China for even a mere 97 years or so, was because they were able to rely both on a combination of Mongol and Chinese skills and techniques (Zhou Yongyi, 1987, pp. 247-275). The short-lived Dynasty of the Yuan was clearly heavily influenced by previous dynasties both politically and culturally. The Mongols did, however, forcibly bring in their own political authenticity and cultural identity. The jades of the Yuan period, while reflecting some of the glory of the ten-thousand-year old Chinese jade-culture, blossomed with the new ideas and fresh concepts of the Mongols. The Mongols accumulated extensive collections of earlier Chinese art, which was mostly kept in the capital. The most significant influence on the art created during the Yuan Dynasty is largely seen to have been Chinese, although much of it was probably produced under the barbarian administration of the Yuan court.

As a result of the Chinese influence, jade craftsmanship during the Yuan Dynasty largely retained its connections with its Chinese roots. The ornamentation with flowers, birds, clouds, dragons and the like, and the habit of creating compositions containing a moral or a metaphor, were taken from the Chinese repertory. As a

¹ The depiction of either human figures or plants on their own in full relief is not a subject of this thesis. For that reason, human figures and plants have not been catalogued, unless they appear as “background” along with animals, birds or fish.

consequence, it has been said that much of the civilisation seen in the Yuan court was in fact the result of an accumulation of centuries of Chinese art and culture, rather than a specific rendering of the Yuan situation under the Mongol emperors (Lee, 1993, p. 1).

Some of the creatures, including mythical ones, on the jades were symbolic in function as well as being naturalistically depicted. The dragon and phoenix were symbols of the emperor and empress; fish suggested a prosperous life; the lion implied beauty and grace of power. Mostly, if not exclusively, this symbolism indicates an association with Indian Buddhism and Chinese cultural influence. The use of birds like the egret, peacock and crane as symbols of longevity and harmony was not a Mongol invention, but a tradition inherited from previous Chinese dynasties. Each of these birds had its historical significance, social function or conventional place in Chinese art. It would seem, however, that the Mongols did not have any problem in adopting these ready-made concepts and continuing with them unaltered. This shows that the philosophy, concepts and culture of jade-work during the Yuan Dynasty must have experienced a period of merging and blending. The Mongols were happy to embrace what they found in China and learned from the Chinese, but their style of carving and their depiction of creatures were distinctive and characteristic of the Yuan period, being to a large degree a combination of Mongolian and Chinese ideas and aesthetics (Yin Zhiqiang, 1999, p. 62). The influx of animal motifs realistically portrayed had the effect of reviving Chinese art, making it more naturalistic and less conventional (Andersson, 1934, p87.). Yuan style was indeed typical of nomad art, a style instilled with life.

9.4 PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

The functions of jade animalss have rarely been touched upon in literature, and where definitions have been made, they have probably been assumptions rather than a matter of solid understanding (Rawson, 1995, p. 353). This would of necessity continue be the case were there not many options to help us understand the

significance of creatures to the Mongols in the Yuan period. Historical records, however, indicate that animal, bird and fish images were not chosen at random or by mere chance, even though not all the functions of them or the reasons for their selection are clearly or thoroughly understood by us in present times. Discussions throughout this thesis have elucidated various profound reasons and considerations which governed the selection of certain animals for certain jades and for certain usages.

I should now proceed to point out a few remaining problems arising from my research, ones that may have wide-ranging implications for future studies in the same area.

Firstly, the lack of jades excavated from identified tombs of the Yuan Dynasty has resulted in barely a sufficiency of material as a basis in itself for conducting studies on the topic. Even when a particular excavation has clearly indicated that a particular tomb can be dated to the Yuan Dynasty, this does not automatically mean that its contents, such as jades, could not have been made some time before the Yuan period, and have been passed down to the occupant of the tomb. All that such artefacts indicate is that they were made not later than their burial date. A chain of questions remains: when exactly were they made, where, what for, why and how? Among the small quantity of jades unearthed there are also inconsistencies with regard to style, which make it premature to set up any standards for further comparison.

Furthermore, because the Yuan Dynasty chronologically overlapped with the Jin and Song dynasties, many of the unearthed jades seem to bear traces of, or have similarities to, the preceding Jin and Song eras. What is more, the art of Mongol folk craftsmen can be divided into over 20 types, according to their ways of execution, including such as artistic carvings, ornaments, leather appliqué, raised inscriptions, embroidery, gold- and silver-work, sculpture, etc. (Tsulten, 1987, p. 87). Creatures that have not appeared frequently in the jades considered for this thesis, may have been popular in those other forms of art. So this research is merely taking a first step

to look into issues concerning Yuan jades, but, it is hoped, also provides some initial studies that will facilitate an examination of animal depiction in other arts.

I should further direct attention to an issue which is closely associated with one of the purposes of this present study. As has been indicated in the Introduction to my thesis and in Chapter Two, the precise dating of jades cannot yet be undertaken, and will remain impossible until a scientific method has been devised for the positive identification of the age of a jade object. One of the main aims of this thesis has been to accumulate illustrations of a sizeable number of Yuan jade artefacts, and in the course of doing to establish a reasonable frame of reference with which to measure other jade works. It remains a tough challenge and a major hurdle to identify Yuan jade objects mineralogically and chronologically so as to enable further research to be conducted on other jades. As a consequence of this situation, some of the jade objects in this thesis have been discussed as objects which were perhaps made during the Yuan period, rather than as definite examples of Yuan production. The many uncertainties include the possible dating as Song or Yuan of the piece illustrated in Fig. 7-20, the probably Jin, Liao or Yuan carving-style shown in Figs. 5-4 & 5-17, and the probably Chinese or Mongol identity of the piece illustrated in Fig. 7-60.

Finally and most importantly, in a rarely employed but vital approach combining both art and science, in order to reveal various seldom disclosed or even conceived-of aspects of jade creatures, my research has sought to bridge the huge gap between these two major areas of intellectual activity and bring out the deeper significance of animals in jade. There has been a serious lack of materials on animal biology and ecology with regard to the Yuan period, indeed of anything scientifically reliable for analysing animals of that time. Thus there is a poverty of informational resources concerning matters such as animal taxonomy and distribution, matters which may have had an impact on the Mongols' knowledge of, and principle for choosing, animals. Most of the material on animal history that I have consulted was published in the last few decades. Useful and reliable information of animal species from ancient Chinese works has also been employed to help with analysis. It is hoped that

more historical and archaeological evidence will be brought to light in the future, to allow of a better understanding of the functions of animals in jade.

This research has concentrated on the animals depicted in jade alone, but with some comparison with relevant and related images in other arts. It is incomplete in the sense that more information is needed, not only from the realm of science but also from that of art, to explain why particular animals were selected for depiction in jade. A more precise assessment of why the animals were chosen cannot be attained until a sufficient number of animals in other forms of art have been extensively studied in a similarly co-ordinated way. Such studies may take us nearer to a definitive insight into the jade industry during Yuan times and in the Yuan court. This present thesis, concerned as it is with one of the least studied periods of Chinese history - the Yuan Dynasty, and with one of the most difficult subjects - animal depiction in jade, takes first and a crucial step towards that goal.

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Abbreviations used in this bibliography:

- SB* *Sibu Beiyao* 四部备要 (*Selection of the Most Important Works and the Better Editions from the Great Chinese Anthology*)
- SQ* *Siku Quanshu* 四库全书 (*Complete Imperial Encyclopaedia of the Four Grand Categories*)
- SY* *Shuo Yu* 说玉 (*Talk on Jades*)

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